THE Abbey Classics

THE LETTERS OF RUNNYMEDE

By

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

Introduction by

FRANCIS BICKLEY

Ornamented by Martin Travers

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CONTENTS

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

The Modern Dunciad, 1826.
Vivian Grey, 1826.
The Infernal Marriage, 1828.
Ixion in Heaven, 1828.
Popanilla, 1828.
The Young Duke, 1831.
Contarini Fleming, 1832.
The Wondrous Tale of Alroy, 1833.
What is He? 1833.
The Rise of Iskander, 1834.
The Revolutionary Epic, 1834.
A Vindication of the British Constitution, 1835.
The Letters of Runnymede, 1836.
Venetia, 1837.
Henrietta Temple, 1837.
Count Alarcos, 1839.
Coningsby, 1844.
Sybil, 1845.
Tancred, 1847.
Life of Lord George Bentinck, 1852.
Lothair, 1870.
Endymion, 1880.

INTRODUCTION

It may be admitted at once that the political and historical interest of *The Letters of Runnymede* has very largely evaporated The delinquencies of Lord Melbourne and his colleagues the unholy alliance with O'Connell, the municipal corporations bill and Lord John's appropriation clause are matters of concern to few but specialists, nor is it possible to feel for their own sakes, a very lively interest in such persons of minor importance in their transient day as Mr Spring Rice, Lord Glenelg or Sir John Cam Hobhouse, who, forgotten as a politician unread as a man of letters, has achieved a sort of ambiguous and dependent immortality as the rather tiresome companion of Childe Harold on his pilgrimage Disraeli, indeed, noted in his diary with his usual amazing self complacency, that by these letters he had established such a character as a great political writer To ask how such a character could have been established by a publication of which the author boasted the inviolable anonymity is beside the mark, for the secret was probably never more than *un secret de Polichinelle* and when the letters were reprinted there was appended to them a treatise on the *Spirit of Whiggism*, which no one could have doubted was by the same hand as the *Vindication of the English Constitution* published as Disraeli's in the previous year Such light anachronistic dust as the claim to have assisted at Lord John Russell's *début* in Parliament, or to have chatted with Richard Cumberland, can have confused the eyes of no intelligent readers The point in the diary entry

at which it is more legitimate to cavil is the assertion, or implication, that the letters are great political literature. Effective journalism they may have been, sensational they certainly were; but as contributions to the philosophy of politics they were nothing, if not, in view of their patent unfairness and probable incidental insincerities, less than nothing.

If they are still worth reading, therefore, it is for their literary merit, or as documents in the history of their author's personality; and, while both these grounds are sufficient to uphold them, it is on the second that they stand most securely. All Disraeli's writings have, in varying proportions, this double justification. Nothing that he wrote, unless, perhaps, that masterpiece in miniature, *Ixion in Heaven*, is perfect; everything, or nearly everything, has enough of literary value to preserve it from oblivion. But even in his best work, even in stories so good, merely as stories, as *Coningsby* and *Sybil*, the man behind the book claims at least half our attention. The fact is that Disraeli was one of those personalities who are more interesting than their own literature. He was the most remarkable figure who had been seen in English society since Byron.

And *The Letters of Runnymede* appeared at, and gave expression to, a particularly interesting moment in his career. For the first time he had achieved, if more in appearance than reality, a state of equilibrium, had set himself a definite and intelligible course, and found a goal for his restless spirit in the unadventurous haven of the Tory Party. That he was soon to be troubling the waters of that haven, to be scandalising his more respectable fellow-mariners by hoisting a flag which bore a suspicious resemblance to the Jolly Roger, is not to the present point.

heads.' The man who was to utter, through the lips of Sidonia, the panegyric on youth which is one of his most famous passages, had, at 'that fatal thirty-seven,' done—not nothing, indeed: he had done a great deal—but very little which could help him to immortality.

Moreover, if what he had done was of ambiguous worth, there was equal room for doubt as to what he was, politically or socially. He moved in fashionable circles, and, still more easily, in the half-fashionable bohemian world of which Lady Blessington was the queen, D'Orsay the master of ceremonies, and the *Keepsake* and the *Book of Beauty* the literary organs. There were many who liked him; many who admired his work; some who believed in his destiny. But there were many who did not like him, thought him, as did the officers' mess at Malta, a 'damned bumptious Jew boy,' or regarded him with suspicion. Most numerous of all, perhaps, were those who entirely failed to understand him.

All of which was perfectly natural. Extravagances of dress and manner, and Disraeli could be absurdly extravagant in both, have never much commended themselves to the ordinary decent Englishman. They might go down with a D'Orsay, who was a Frenchman, or a Bulwer, who was a minor Byron (Byron himself would probably have regarded the young Disraeli with contempt); coupled with an insinuating tongue, they might seem charming to ladies who remembered the sensation of *Childe Harold* and admired its feeble, saccharine echoes in the drawing-room literature of the day; but what was the normal gentleman to make of a fellow who preferred peacocks to pheasants?

Nor did the young man's earliest political manifestations help matters. He did not seem to know whether he

of the enemy was by no means secure, and that there was, after all, a chance of the revival of that historic Toryism which made so strong an æsthetic appeal to him, he gladly dropped the Radical connection and identified himself with the Tories. The determining causes of the young politician's decision were Lord Melbourne's accommodation with O'Connell and his own association with the attractive Lyndhurst.

Having chosen his part, he was not content to be merely a Tory. Any inarticulate fox-hunting squire could be *that*. Benjamin Disraeli, man of letters and aspirant (as he had already told Melbourne) to the premiership, must explain the basis of his position. This he did most notably in the *Vindication of the English Constitution*, published in 1835, within a few days of his thirty-first birthday. It is a pamphlet which is still worthy of perusal. How far its arguments are sound is for those versed in constitutional history to decide; but, granted the premises, it is a brilliant and cogent survey of the development of our institutions. Even if it does not speak the whole truth and nothing but the truth, the Whig lie about English history has been so long triumphant that it is refreshing for a change to hear the Tory lie eloquently told. That Disraeli believed in his own arguments there is no room to doubt. The *Vindication*, though it has its touches of clap-trap, is one of the most patently sincere of all his works. It won praise from both Peel and Lyndhurst, and, according to Mr. Monypenny, 'from the first exerted no inconsiderable influence on the development of political thought.'

Whether it had much effect on the rank and file of the party whose existence it was sent into the world to justify, is another question. While Liberalism is based on theories which its adherents can, and do, only too

volubly expound, the main supporters of Conservatism have always been honest, rather stupid folk, whose faith springs from a healthy instinct which they not only cannot explain themselves, but are inclined to resent having explained to them by others They look askance at the apologists of what, being a law of nature, needs no apology Hence, the clever, articulate Conservative has always a hard fight against the suspicions of his own friends, and when he conquers, it is to become the object of a blind adoration which is hardly more helpful

But if the ordinary Conservative has little use for

and approve scathing ridicule where ridicule was due, merciless exposure of the scoundrels who were ruining the country There had been nothing like it since the days of Junius

The comparison with Junius is inevitable, for that great unknown was obviously Runnymede's model It is a com

sustain

are, they

of their prototypes They are the productions of an amateur, while the *Letters of Junius* are the work of one whose profession was denigration One feels that Disraeli is writing at least half in fun, whereas Francis (if

helves

of could

not quite emulate the eighteenth century calm In his complex personality the Voltairean and the romantic

extravagant picture of the Colonial Office as a new Castle of Indolence under his soporific *regime* One is unconcerned with the flagrant injustices, unoffended even by the breaches of taste Just as in the novels one delights in the vivid portraiture—the Rigby and the Monmouth, the Alcibiades de Mirabel and the Lady Bellair—without inquiring too closely into its literal accuracy, one can read these letters as a sort of series of studies for a *roman a clef* of which the author has not troubled to turn the key Our estimates of the real Melbourne, the real Palmerston, are unaffected by Runnymede's ridicule, while our estimates of Grafton and Bedford will always be to some extent coloured by the venom of Junius

It is highly improbable that Disraeli himself believed his caricatures to be faithful likenesses His business was not only to 'dish the Whigs,' but to dish them up, roasted and skewered, as a banquet for hungry Tories No doubt he had not yet drawn the clear distinction which he was to expound in *Coningsby* between the Toryism of his dream and the Conservatism of present fact, but there is evidence to show that he was even then far from seeing Peel as the saviour of society whom it suited Runnymede's book to paint in such glowing colours Lord John Russell, here held up to scorn as the personification of 'a strong ambition and a feeble intellect,' and finally dismissed as an 'insect,' received only a few years later, in *Coningsby* once more, a generous meed of praise, and Palmerston, the 'Sporus of politics,' who reminded the virtuous satirist of a 'battered female sinner taking refuge from conscious scorn in rouge and the affected giggle of fluttering folly,' was to be the subject, as the Lord Roehampton of *Endymion*, of one of the novelist's most sympathetic re creations Nor is it

met and mingled; and if the one made him a satirist, the other made him an enthusiast. *The Letters of Runnymede* certainly show the satirist uppermost, but the enthusiast is there too, and his function is to stultify, at any rate in some degree, the satirist's work. One of Disraeli's own best-known phrases might be turned against him. He might be called the Rupert of Satire. He charged recklessly through the enemy, and their ranks closed behind him very little the worse for the onslaught. The very extravagance of his attack defeated its purpose.

It is this extravagance, however, which keeps the letters readable. If Disraeli's romanticism, when unsalted by his humour, was apt to be too gushing (a favourite adjective of his own) for the taste of any age but one of decadent Byronism, the two qualities in combination, the Voltairean head acting in concert with the romantic heart, give his books, from *Vivian Grey* to *Endymion* (that delightful swan-song which has been so strangely belittled), their distinctive quality. The same combination, moreover, enabled him, when once he had attained to political power, to use a Macchiavellian craft in the furtherance of an idealism as sincere as Mazzini's.

It was, in fact, the result of his immense vitality, the gusto which carried him to pre-eminence over obstacles which intelligence alone, however acute, could hardly have surmounted. Disraeli lived his life powerfully, because he enjoyed it intensely, and his books are the expression of his enjoyment. It infects their pages, and it is contagious. That is why one can enjoy *Runnymede* without being particularly interested in its occasion. The question, for instance, whether a forgotten Lord Glenelg is being treated fairly or unfairly in no way affects one's appreciation of that brilliant,

extravagant picture of the Colonial Office as a new Castle of Indolence under his soporific *régime* One is unconcerned with the flagrant injustices, unoffended even by the breaches of taste Just as in the novels one delights in the vivid portraiture—the Rigby and the Monmouth, the Alcibiades de Mirabel and the Lady Bellair—without inquiring too closely into its literal accuracy, one can read these letters as a sort of series of studies for a *roman a clef* of which the author has not troubled to turn the key Our estimates of [illegible]

[illegible]

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his caricatur [illegible]
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to be supposed that Disraeli, when he professed his despair at the possibility of anything making Melbourne 'cease to saunter over the destinies of a nation, and lounge away the glory of an empire,' was unaware of the capacity for hard work which lay behind the Minister's nonchalant manner. His concern was to exhibit his victims in a motley travesty of their own more obvious foibles, and he did it with such picturesque but uncritical exuberance that the result is probably more amusing to-day than it was damaging to those whom it was intended to damage eighty odd years ago.

FRANCIS BICKLEY.

Privy Seal—Lord Duncannon.
Chancellor of the Exchequer—Mr. Spring Rice.
Home Secretary—Lord John Russell.
Foreign Secretary—Lord Palmerston.
Colonial Secretary—Mr. Charles Grant (afterwards Lord Glenelg).
Admiralty—Lord Auckland.
Board of Control—Sir John Cam Hobhouse (afterwards Lord Broughton).
Secretary of War—Lord Howick.
Board of Trade—Mr. Poulett Thomson (afterwards Lord Sydenham).
Attorney-General—Sir John Campbell.
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster—Lord Holland.

The Great Seal of the Lord Chancellor remained in commission, owing to the fact that the overbearing and treacherous conduct in the past of Brougham, who was the obvious choice, had made him detested not only by the King and the Opposition, but also by his own party. It was not until January, 1836, that Sir Charles Pepys was promoted to the Woolsack under the title of Lord Cottenham, a Chancellor at least as undistinguished as any who have held that office.

In January, 1836, a series of letters attacking the Government, notable for the bitterness of their tone, and the shrewdness of their thrusting power, appeared in the columns of *The Times* over the pseudonym of Runnymede. Though the actual authorship has never definitely been acknowledged, conjecture has fixed them as the work of a young journalist, Mr. Benjamin Disraeli, who had already hit the popular taste with several novels of unusual merit, and who was the son of the well-known litterateur Mr. Isaac Disraeli.

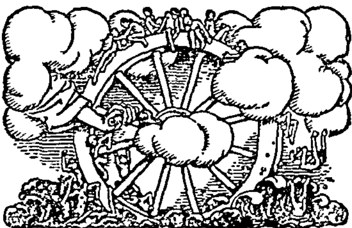
THE LETTERS

OF

RUNNYMEDE

'Neither for shame nor fear this mask he wore,
That, like a vizor in the battle-field,
But shrouds a manly and a daring brow'

LONDON
MDCCCXXXVI



DEDICATION.

TO THE

RIGHT HON. SIR ROBERT PEEL, BART., M.P.

Sir,—I have the honour to dedicate to you a volume illustrative of WHIGS and WHIGGISM. It has been my object to delineate within its pages not only the present characters and recent exploits of the most active of the partisans, but also the essential and permanent spirit of the party. It appeared to me that it might be advantageous to connect the criticism on the character of the hour with some researches into the factious idiosyncrasy of centuries. Political

parties are not so inconsistent as the superficial imagine; and, in my opinion, the Whig of a century back does not differ so materially as some would represent from the Whig of the present day. I hope, therefore, that this volume may conduce, not only to the amusement, but to the instruction of my countrymen.

It is now, Sir, some six months past since I seized the occasion of addressing you another letter, written under very different auspices. The session of Parliament was then about to commence; it is now about to close. These six months have not been uneventful in results. If they have not witnessed any legislative enactment eminently tending to our social welfare, they have developed much political conduct for which our posterity may be grateful: for this session, Sir, has at least been memorable for one great event—an event not inferior, in my estimation, in its beneficial influence on the fortunes of the country, to Magna Charta itself—I mean the rally of the English Constitution; I might use a stronger phrase, I might say its triumph.

And it has triumphed because it has become understood. The more its principles have

been examined, the more the intention of its various parts has been investigated, and its general scope comprehended, the more beneficent and profound has appeared the polity of our fathers. The public mind of late has been cleared of a vast amount of error in constitutional learning. Scarcely a hired writer would have the front at this day to pretend that a difference of opinion between the two Houses of Parliament is a collision between the Peers and the People. That phrase 'the People' is a little better comprehended now than it used to be, it will not serve for the stalking horse of faction as it did. We know very well that the House of Commons is not the House of 'the People,' we know very well that 'the People' is a body not intelligible in a political sense, we know very well that the Lords and the Commons are both sections of the Nation, and both alike and equally representative of that great community. And we know very well that if the contrary propositions to all these were maintained, the Government of this English Empire might, at this moment, be the pastime and plunder of some score of Irish adventurers.

When, Sir, you quitted Drayton in Feb-

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ruary,[1] the vagabond delegate of a foreign priesthood[2] was stirring up rebellion against the Peers of England, with the implied, if not the definite, sanction of His Majesty's Ministers. Where is that hired disturber now? Like base coin detected by the very consequences of its currency, and finally nailed against the counter it had deceived, so this bad politician, like a bad shilling, has worn off his edge by his very restlessness. Parliament met, and the King's Ministers exhibited with a flourish their emblazoned catalogue of oligarchical *coups-d'état*, by which they were to entrench themselves in power under the plea of ameliorating our society.[3] Not one o these measures has been carried. Yet w were told that their success was certain, an by a simp'e process—by the close and i contestable union between all true reforme The union between all true reformers terminated in the mutiny of Downing Stree

[1] The opening of Parliament, 1836.

[2] Daniel O'Connell.

[3] Bills for the Reform of Ecclesiastical Establishment Tithe Commutation, for the Redress of the Grievanc Dissenters, for the Reform of the Court of Chancery, f Settlement of the Irish Tithe Dispute, for the Reform o Municipal Corporations, and for the Assimilation o Irish Poor Law to that of England.

[4] Lord John Russell revolted on the Irish Church que

I believe that I have commemorated in th
volume that celebrated harangue, which th
Chancellor of the Exchequer, at the commence
ment of the session, addressed at a dinner to hi
constituents You may perhaps remember,
Sir, the glowing promises of that Right
Honourable Gentleman they seemed almost
to announce the advent of a political millen-
nium 'First and foremost,' announced the
Right Honourable Chancellor, we shall pro
ceed in our great work of the reform of the
Court of Equity,' the *opus magnum* of the
gifted Cottenham It seems the course of
nature was reversed here, and the butterfly
turned into grub 'Our earnest attention
will then be directed,' quoth Mr Rice,[1] 'to
he entire and complete relief of our Dissenting
rethren and fellow-subjects' How liberal,
w condescending, and how sincere! The
ssenters are absolutely our fellow-subjects
ne but a Whig, a statesman almost eructat-
with the plenary inspiration of the spirit
e age, could have been capable of making
ilosophical an admission In the mean-
six months have passed, and nothing has
done for our unhappy 'fellow subjects,'

Spring Rice afterwards Lord Monteagle

while the Dissenting organs denounce even the projected alleviations as a miserable insult. To justice to Ireland Mr. Rice of course was pledged, and most determined to obtain it; but his Bills have been dishonoured nevertheless. And the settlement of the Irish Tithe, and the Reform of the Irish Corporations, are about as much advanced by this great Whig Government as the relief of the Dissenters and the reform of the Court of Chancery. What have they done then? What pledge have they redeemed? The Ecclesiastical Courts remain unpurged. Even the Stamp Act, through the medium of which the Whigs, as usual, have levelled a blow at the liberty of the press, has not passed yet, and in its present inquisitorial form can never become a law. What then, I repeat, have they done? They promised indeed to break open the prisons like Jack Cade; but as yet the gates are barred; the pensions are still paid, and the soldiers still flogged. Oh! ye Scribes of the Treasury and Pharisees of Downing Street!

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July 27, 1836 RUNNYMEDE

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twenty six, Lord Melbourne still clings to his mulish and ungenerative position of place without power, and with a degree of modest frankness and constitutional propriety equally admirable, pledges himself before his country that, as long as he is supported by a majority of the House of Commons, he will remain Minister I apprehend the ratification of a Ministry is as necessary by one House of Parliament as by the other, but I stop not to discuss this The choice of Ministers was once entrusted to a different authority than that of either Lords or Commons But this is an old almanack, and I leave Lord Viscount Melbourne to shake its dust off at his next interview with his projected Doge of Windsor

July 27, 1836 RUNNYMEDE

LETTER I

To Viscount Melbourne

My Lord,—The Marquis of Halifax[1] was wont to say of his Royal Master, that, 'after all, his favourite Sultana Queen was sauntering.' It is, perhaps, hopeless that your Lordship should rouse yourself from the embraces of that Siren Desidia to whose fatal influence you are not less a slave than our second Charles, and that you should cease to saunter over the destinies of a nation, and lounge away the glory of an empire.[2] Yet the swift shadows of coming events are assuredly sufficiently dark and ominous to startle from its indolence even

The Sleekest Swine in Epicurus' sty.[3]

When I recall to my bewildered memory the perplexing circumstance that William Lamb is Prime Minister of England, it seems to me

[1] Saville, Marquis of Halifax.

[2] 'He is certainly a queer fellow to be Prime Minister . . . he is considered lax in morals, indifferent in religion, and very loose and pliant in politics.'—Greville.

[3] 'The fattest hog in Epicurus' sty.'—Mason, *Heroic Epistle*.

that I recollect with labour the crowning incident of some grotesque dream, or that in some pastime of the season you have drawn for the amusement of a nation a temporary character, ludicrously appropriate only from the total want of connection and fitness between the festive part and the individual by whom it is sustained Previous to the passing of the famous Act of 1832, for the amendment of popular representation, your reputation, I believe, principally depended upon your talent for prologue writing No one was held to introduce with more grace and spirit the performances of an amateur society With the exception of an annual oration against parliamentary reform, your career in the House of Commons was never remarkably distinguished Your Cabinet, indeed, appears to have been constructed from the materials of your old dramatic company The domestic policy of the country is entrusted to the celebrated author of *Don Carlos*,[1] the Fletcher of this Beaumont, the author of the *Siege of Constantinople*[2] (an idea apparently borrowed from your Russian allies) is the guardian of the lives and properties of the Irish clergy,

[1] Lord John Russell Home Secretary
[2] Viscount Morpeth Chief Secretary of Ireland

under the charitable supervision of that 'first tragedy man,' the Lord of Mulgrave;[1] Lord Glenelg[2] admirably personifies a sleepy audience; while your Chancellor of the Exchequer[3] beats Mr. Power[4]; and your Secretary for Foreign Affairs,[5] in his mimetic sympathy with French manners and intimate acquaintance with French character, is scarcely inferior to the late ingenious Charles Mathews. That general adapter from the Spanish, Lord Holland, gives you all the advantage, in the affairs of the Peninsula, of his early studies of Lope de Vega, and, indeed, with his skilful assistance you appear, by all accounts, to have woven a plot absurd and complicated enough even for the grave humour of Madrid or the gay fancy of Seville. For yourself is still reserved a monopoly of your peculiar talent, and doubtless on February 4 you will open your House with an introductory composition worthy of your previous reputation.

I remember some years ago listening to one of these elegant productions from the practised pen of the present Prime Minister of Great

[1] Earl of Mulgrave, Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland.
[2] Rt. Hon. Charles Grant, 1st Baron Glenelg.
[3] Mr. Spring Rice. [4] Tyrone Power, the actor.
[5] Lord Palmerston.

Britain, if not of Ireland I think it was on that occasion that you annunciated to your audience the great moral discovery that the characteristic of the public mind of the present day was

A taste for evil

Our taste for evil does not seem to be on the wane, since it has permitted this great empire to be governed by the Whigs, and has induced even those Whigs to be governed by an Irish rebel[1] Your prologue, my Lord, was quite prophetic

If your Royal Master's speech at the opening of his Parliament may share its inspirations, it will tell to the people of England some terrible truths

It will announce, in the first place, that the policy of your theatrical Cabinet has at length succeeded in dividing the people of England into two hostile camps, in which numbers are arrayed against property, ignorance against knowledge, and sects against institutions.

It will announce to us, that your theatrical Cabinet has also been not less fortunate in maturing the passive resistance of the enemy in Ireland into active hostility, and that you

[1] O Connell—a reference to the Lichfield House compact

have obtained the civil war from which the Duke of Wellington shrank, without acquiring the political security which might have been its consequence.

It will announce to us, that in foreign affairs you and your company have finally succeeded in destroying all our old alliances without substituting any new ones; and that, after having sacrificed every principle of British policy to secure an intimate alliance with France, the Cabinet of the Tuileries has even had the airy audacity to refuse its co-operation in that very treaty in which its promises alone involved you; and that, while the British Minister can with extreme difficulty obtain an audience at St. Petersburg, the Ambassador of France passes with a polite smile of gay recognition the luckless representative of William IV., who is lounging in an ante-chamber in the enjoyment of an indolence which even your Lordship might envy.

It will announce to us, that in our colonial empire the most important results may speedily be anticipated from the discreet selection of Lord Auckland as a successor to our Clives and our Hastings;[1] that the progressive

[1] George Eden, second Earl of Auckland.

improvement of the French in the manufactur
of beet-root may compensate for the approach
ing destruction of our West Indian plantations
and that, although Canada is not yet indepen
dent, the final triumph of liberal principles,
under the immediate patronage of the Govern-
ment, may eventually console us for the loss
of the glory of Chatham and the conquests of
Wolfe.

At home or abroad, indeed, an agreeable
prospect on every side surrounds you. Your
Lordship may exclaim with Hannibal, 'Behind
us are the Alps, before us is Eridanus!' And
who are your assistants to stem the profound
and impetuous current of this awful futurity?
At an unconstitutional expenditure of four
coronets, which may some day figure as an
article in an impeachment, the Whigs have at
length obtained a Lord Chancellor,[1] as a
lawyer not illustrious, as a statesman a nonen-
ity. The seals of the principal office of the
tate are entrusted to an individual, who, on
he principle that good vinegar is the corrup-
on of bad wine, has been metamorphosed

[1] Christopher Charles Pepys, Earl of Cottenham The
er coronets referred to in the text were those of Lord
nmore and of Lady Stratheden, the latter of which was
owed to console her husband Sir John (afterwards Lord)
pbell for his exclusion from the Chancellorship
c

from an incapable author into an eminent politician.[1] His brother Secretaries remind me of two battered female sinners; one frivolous, the other exhausted; one taking refuge from conscious scorn in rouge and the affected giggle of fluttering folly, and the other in strong waters and devotion.[2] Then Mr. Spring Rice waves a switch, which he would fain persuade you is a shillelagh; while the Rienzi of Westminster smiles with marvelling complacency at the strange chapter of accidents which has converted a man whose friends pelted George Lamb with a cabbage-stalk into a main prop of William Lamb's Cabinet.

Some yet remain; the acute intelligence of Lansdowne, the polished mind of Thomson,[3] Howick's[4] calm maturity, and the youthful energy of Holland.[5]

And this is the Cabinet that controls the destinies of a far vaster population than owned the sway of Rome in the palmiest hour of its imperial fame! Scarron or Butler should celebrate its political freaks, and the shifting

[1] Lord John Russell. [2] Lords Palmerston and Glenelg.
[3] Poulett Thomson, the President of the Board of Trade.
[4] Viscount Howick (the present Earl Grey), Secretary at War; 'the bitterest of all that party,' says Greville.
[5] Fox, Lord Holland, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster —a martyr to gout and almost in his dotage in 1836.

expedients of its ignoble statecraft But while I watch you in your ludicrous councils, an awful shade rises from behind the chair of my Lord President Slaves! it is your master, it is Eblis with Captain Rock's bloody cap shadowing his atrocious countenance In one hand he waves a torch, and in the other clutches a skull. He gazes on his victims with a leer of fiendish triumph Contemptible as you are, it is this dark connection that involves your fate with even an epic dignity, and makes the impending story of your retributive fortunes assume almost a Dantesque sublimity

January 18, 1836

LETTER II

To Sir John Campbell[1]

Sir,—I have always been of opinion—an opinion I imbibed early in life from great

[1] Sir John Campbell a lawyer chiefly notable for his energy and unremitting industry held the post of Attorney General in the first Melbourne ministry on the understanding that he was not to expect to succeed to any vacancy in the judiciary On the formation of the second Melbourne administration Campbell was found indispensable as Attorney General but as compensation for the passing over of his claim Lady Campbell was created a peeress under the title of Lady Stratheden

authorities—that the Attorney- and Solicitor-General were not more the guardians of the honour and the interests of the Crown than of the honour and the interests of the Bar. It appears to me that you have failed in your duty as representative of this once illustrious body, and therefore it is that I address to you this letter.

Although your political opponent, I trust I am not incapable of acknowledging and appreciating your abilities and acquirements. They are sound, but they are not splendid. You have mastered considerable legal reading, you are gifted with no ordinary shrewdness, you have enjoyed great practice, and you have gained great experience; you possess undaunted perseverance and invincible industry. But you can advance no claim to the refined subtlety of an Eldon, and still less to the luminous precision, the quick perception, the varied knowledge, and accomplished eloquence of a Lyndhurst. In profound learning you cannot cope for a moment with Sir Edward Sugden;[1] as an advocate you can endure no competition with your eminent father-in-law,[2]

[1] Lord St. Leonards.

[2] Sir James Scarlett, afterwards Lord Abinger.

or with Sir William Follett, or—for I am not writing as a partisan—with Mr Serjeant Wilde As a pleader I believe you were distinguished, though there are many who, even in this humble province, have deemed that you might yield the palm to Mr Baron Parke and Mr Justice Littledale

But, whatever be your merits or defects, you are *still the King's Attorney-General*, and as the King's Attorney-General you have a prescriptive, if not a positive, right to claim any seat upon the judgment bench which becomes vacant during your official tenure This prescriptive right has never been doubted in the profession It has been understood and acted upon by members of the bar, of all parties, and at all times In recent days, Sir Robert Gifford,[1] though a common law lawyer, succeeded to the equity tribunal of Sir Thomas Plomer It is true that Sir Robert Gifford, for a very short time previous to his accession, had practised in the Court of Chancery, but the right of the Attorney-General to succeed, under any circumstances, was again recognised by Lord Eldon, when Sir John Copley,[2] who had never been in an

[1] Lord Gifford Master of the Rolls 1824 [2] Lord Lyndhurst

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[1] Lord Gifford, Master of the Rolls 1824. [2] Lord Lyndhurst

Equity Court in his life, became Master of the Rolls. On this occasion it is well known that Leach, the Vice-Chancellor, was anxious to succeed Lord Gifford, but his request was not for a moment listened to in preference to the claim of the Attorney-General.

In allowing a judge,[1] who a very short time back was your inferior officer, to become Lord Chancellor of England, and in permitting a barrister, who had not even filled the office of Solicitor-General, to be elevated over your head into the seat of the Master of the Rolls; either you must have esteemed yourself absolutely incompetent to the discharge of those great offices, or you must have been painfully conscious of your marked inferiority to both the individuals who were promoted in your teeth; or last, and bitterest alternative, you must have claimed your right, and been denied its enjoy ment. In the first instance, you virtuall declared that you were equally unfit for th office you at present hold, and what shou have been your consequent conduct is obvio in the second, you betrayed the interests the bar; and in the third, you betrayed

[1] Lord Cottenham (Pepys, Solicitor-General in Melbourne's first Ministry).

only the interests of the bar, but its honour also.

'Without imputing to Sir John Campbell any [illegible]. I cannot bring [illegible]s himself absolutely unfit for the discharge of the offices in question. I will not even credit that he has yielded to his unfeigned sense of his marked inferiority to the supernatural wisdom and miraculous acquirements of my Lord Cottenham, or that his downcast vision has been dazzled by the wide extended celebrity that surrounds with a halo the name of Bickersteth![1] No, Sir, we will not trench upon the manorial right of modesty which is the monopoly of your colleague, Sir Monsey Rolfe,[2] that public man on the *lucus a non lucendo* principle, that shadowy entity which all have heard of, few seen. An individual, it would appear, of a rare humility and admirable patience, and born, as it were, to exemplify the beauty of resignation.

I believe, therefore, that you claimed the office—that you claimed your right, and that you were refused it. That must have been a bitter moment, Sir John Campbell—a moment

[1]Afterwards Lord Langdale. [2]Afterwards Lord Cranworth.

which might have made you recollect, perhaps even repeat, the Johnsonian definition of a Whig.[1] You have not hitherto been held a man deficient in spirit, or altogether uninfluenced by that nobler ambition which spurs us on to great careers, and renders the esteem of our fellow-countrymen not the least valuable reward of our exertions. When therefore you were thus insulted, why did you not resent the insult? When your fair ambition was thus scurvily balked, why not have gratified it by proving to a sympathising nation that you were at least worthy of the high post to which you aspired? He who aims to be the guardian of the honour of the Crown, should at least prove that he is competent to protect his own. You ought not to have quitted the Minister's ante-chamber the King's Attorney-General.

Why did you then? Because, as you inform us, your lady is to be ennobled. Is it the carnival, that such jests pass current? Is it part of the code of etiquette in this saturnalia of Whig manners, that the honour of a man is to be vindicated by a compliment to a woman? One cannot refrain from admiring, too, the

[1] WHIG. The name of a faction. *Johnson's Dictionary* 1st edition.

consistent propriety of the whole arrangement. A gentleman, whom his friends announce as a resolved republican, and to whom, but for this slight circumstance, they assert would have been entrusted the custody of the Great Seal, is to be hoisted up into the House of Lords in the masquerade of a Baron; while yourself, whose delicate and gracious panegyric of the Peers of England is still echoing from the movement benches of the House of Commons to the reeking cellars of the Cowgate, find the only consolation for your wounded honour in your son inscribing his name in the *libro d'oro* of our hereditary legislators. Why, if Mr. O'Connell were but simultaneously called up by the title of Baron Rathcormac,[1] in honour of his victory, the batch would be quite complete.

What compensation is it for the injured interests, and what consolation to the outraged honour, of the bar, that your amiable lady is to become a peeress? On the contrary, you have inflicted a fresh stigma on the body of which you are the chief. You have shown to the world that the leading advocate of the day, King's Attorney-General, will accept a :

[1] A small town in County Cork.

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[1] A small town in County Cork

not obtain their result, your conduct h
anticipated the consequence of their machin
tions, the Whigs may corrupt the bar c
England, but you, Sir, have degraded it

January 19, 1836

LETTER III

To Mr Thomas Attwood, M P[1]

Sir,—You may be surprised at this letter being addressed to you, you may be more surprised when I inform you that this address is not occasioned by any conviction of your political importance I deem you a harmless, and I do not believe you to be an ill meaning, individual You are a provincial banker labouring under a financial monomania But amid the seditious fanfaronnade which your unhappy distemper occasions you periodically to vomit forth, there are fragments of good old feelings which show you are not utterly de-

[1] Thomas Attwood banker currency reformer and Radical the founder with the co-operation of Messrs Muntz and Scholefield of the Birmingham Political Union for the protection of Public Rights He became practically the dictator of the Midlands and was conspicuous during the Reform period by the violence of his speeches It was generally recognised that he had largely influenced the passing of the Reform Act

nationalised in spite of being 'the friend of all mankind,'[1] and contrast with the philanthropic verbiage of your revolutionary rhetoric like the odds and ends of ancient art which occasionally jut forth from the modern rubbish of an edifice in a classic land—symptoms of better days, and evidences of happier intellect.

The reason that I have inscribed this letter to your consideration is, that you are a fair representative of a considerable class of your countrymen—the class who talk political nonsense; and it is these with whom, through your medium, I would now communicate.

I met recently with an observation which rather amused me. It was a distinction drawn in some journal between high nonsense and low nonsense. I thought that distinction was rather happily illustrated at the recent meeting of your Union, which, by-the-bye, differs from its old state as the drivellings of idiotism from the frenzy of insanity. When your chairman, who, like yourself, is 'the friend of all mankind,' called Sir Robert Peel 'an ass,'[2] I

[1] Mr. Muntz, 'My friend and your friend; the friend of humanity and benevolence, the friend of all mankind.'—Attwood at Birmingham.

[2] Attwood, addressing a meeting at Birmingham in 1836, referred to Sir Robert Peel as a humbug and an ass, an epithet later used by Mr. Muntz at the same meeting.

thought that Spartan description might fairly range under the head of low nonsense; but when you yourself, as if in contemptuous and triumphant rivalry with his plebeian folly, announced to us that at the sound of your blatant voice 100,000 armed men would instantly rise in Birmingham, it occurred to me that Nat Lee himself could scarcely compete with you in your claim to the more patrician privilege of uttering high nonsense. If indeed you produce such marvels, the name of Attwood will be handed down to posterity in heroic emulation with that of Cadmus; he produced armed men by a process almost as simple, but the teeth of the Theban king must yield to the jaw of the Birmingham delegate, though I doubt not the same destiny would await both batches of warriors.[1]

But these 100,000 armed men are only the advanced guard, the imperial guard of Brummagem, the heralds of a mightier host. Nay, compared with the impending legions, can only count as pioneers, or humble sappers at the best. Twenty millions of men are to

[1] "If the king required it, they could produce him in this district at his order within a month two armies each of them as numerous and brave as that which conquered at Waterloo" —Attwood at Birmingham

their chieftains rallied round it, bringing in the array all that population of the country who were not required to remain at home to maintain its order or civilisation The peasant quitted his plough and the [illegible] and the artisan without employment [illegible] from the pauperism of Babylon or the [illegible] of Samarcand. But these great leaders with their diminutive forces which [illegible] the Lilliputian experience of our ancestors had no conception, with their limited imaginations, of the inexhaustible source whence the ranks of a popular leader may be swelling; they had no idea of 'The People.' It is 'the people' that is to supply their great successor with his millions

As in private life, we are accustomed to associate the circle of our acquaintance with the phrase 'The World,' so in public I have invariably observed that 'The People' of the politician is the circle of his interest. The 'people' of the Whigs are the [illegible] who vote in their favour. At present the municipal [illegible] are almost considered by Lords Melbourne and John [illegible]

[1] An allusion to the Municipal Reform Act [illegible] IV cap [illegible]) which abolished the ancient [illegible] local self-government in the hands of the [illegible]

as, in some instances, to have afforded legitimate claims of being deemed part and parcel of the nation; but I very much fear that the course of events will degrade those bodies from any lengthened participation in this ennobling quality. It is quite clear that the electors of Northamptonshire have forfeited all right to be held portion of 'the people,' since their return of Mr. Maunsell;[1] the people of Birmingham are doubtless those of the inhabitants who huzza the grandiloquence of Mr. Attwood; and the people of England, perchance, those discerning individuals, who, if he were to make a *provincial tour of oratory*, might club together in the different towns to give him a dinner. I hardly think that, all together, these quite amount to 20,000,000.

Yourself and the school to which you belong are apt to describe the present struggle as one between the Conservatives and the people—these Conservatives consisting merely of 300 or 400 peers, and their retainers. You tell us in the same breath, with admirable consistency, that you possess the name, but not the heart of the King; that the Court is secretly, and the

[1] Thomas Philip Maunsell, of Thorpe Malsor, Conservative member for North Northamptonshire from 1835 to 1857.

of your faction has recently confessed that every man who possesses 500*l*. per annum is necessarily your opponent. After this, it is superfluous to remark that the merchants, bankers, and ship-owners of this great commercial and financial country are *not to be* found in your ranks, and the sneers at our national glory and imperial sway which ever play on the patriotic lips of Whigs, both high and low, only retaliate the undisguised scorn with which their anti-national machinations are viewed by the heroes of Waterloo and the conquerors of Trafalgar. Deduct these elements of a nation, deduct all this power, all this authority, all this skill, and all this courage, all this learning, all this wealth, and all these numbers, and all the proud and noble and national feelings which are their consequence, and what becomes of your 'people?' It subsides into an empty phrase, a juggle as pernicious and as ridiculous as your paper currency!

But if you and your friends, 'the friends of all mankind,' have, as indeed I believe you have not, the brute force and the numerical superiority of the population of this realm marshalled under your banners, do not delude yourselves

acquitted if it neglect its posterity;—these are some of the incidents and qualities of a great nation like the people of England. Whether these are to be found in 'the people' who assemble at the meetings of your Union, or whether they may be more successfully sought for among their 20,000,000 of brethren at hand, I leave you, Sir, to decide. I shall only observe, that if I be correct in my estimate of the constituent elements of the English people, I am persuaded that *in spite of all the arts of plundering factions and mercenary demagogues*, they will recognise, with a grateful loyalty, the venerable cause of their welfare in the august fabric of their ancient constitution.

January 21, 1836.

LETTER IV

To Lord Brougham

My Lord,—In your elaborate mimicry of Lord Bacon,[1] your most implacable enemies

[1] 'He (Lord Brougham) thought Lord Bacon's fate was most to be envied. . . . As a judge he boldly and openly said he should excel him . . . he had treatises part begun and part conceived in his own mind which would excel the *Novum Organum*.'—Campbell, *Lives of the Chancellors*.

must confess that, at least in one respect, you have rivalled your great original—you have contrived to get disgraced In your Treatise on Hydrostatics you may not have completely equalled the fine and profound researches of 'the Lord Chancellor of Nature', your most ardent admirers may hesitate in preferring the *Penny Magazine* to the *Novum Organum*, even the musings of Jenkins and the meditations of Tomkins[1] may not be deemed to come quite as much home 'to men's business and bosoms' as the immortal Essays, but no one can deny, neither friend nor foe, that you are as much shunned as their author—almost as much despised

Whether the fame of his philosophical discoveries and the celebrity of his literary exploits may console the late Lord Chancellor of William IV in the solitude of his political annihilation, as they brought balm to the bruised spirit of the late Lord Chancellor of James I in the loneliness of his sublime degradation, he best can decide who may witness the writhings of your tortured memory and the restless expedients of your irritable

[1] See Brougham s Dialogue 'On the Objects Advantages and Pleasures of Science

imagination. At present, I am informed that your Lordship is occupied in a translation of your Treatise of Natural Theology into German, on the Hamiltonian system. The translation of a work on a subject of which you know little, into a tongue of which you know nothing, seems the climax of those fantastic freaks of ambitious superficiality which our lively neighbours describe by a finer term than quackery. But if the perturbed spirit can only be prevented from preying on itself by literary occupation, let me suggest to you, in preference, the propriety of dedicating the days of your salutary retirement to a production of more general interest, and, if properly treated, of more general utility. A memoir of the late years of your career might afford your fellow-countrymen that of which at present they are much in want—a great moral lesson. In its instructive pages we might perhaps learn how a great empire has nearly been sacrificed to the aggrandizement of a rapacious faction; how, under the specious garb of patriotism, a band of intriguing politicians, connected by no community of purpose or of feeling but the gratification of their own base interests, forfeited all the pledges of their

previous careers, or violated all the principles of their practised systems, how, at length, in some degree palled with plundering the nation, according to the usual course, they began plundering themselves; how the weakest, and probably the least impure, were sacrificed to those who were more bold and bad; and, finally, how your Lordship especially, would have shrouded yourself in the mantle, while you kicked away the prophet.

If your Lordship would have but the courageous candour to proceed in this great production, you might, perhaps, favour us with a graphic narrative of that memorable interview between yourself and the present Premier, when, with that easy elocution and unembarrassed manner which characterise the former favourite of Castlereagh, the present First Lord of the Treasury,[1] robbing you of he fruit after you had plundered the orchard,[2] roke to your startled vision and incredulous r the unforeseen circumstance that your ordship was destined to be the scapegoat of higgism, and to be hurried into the wilder-

[1] Lord Melbourne.
[2] Brougham, by his ridiculous conduct as Chancellor, had e no little share in the fall of the ministry of Lord Grey one man of whom he was said to stand in awe) in 1834

ness with all the curses of the nation and all the sins of your companions. This animated sketch would form an admirable accompaniment to the still richer picture when you offered your congratulatory condolence to Earl Grey on his long meditated retirement from the onerous service of a country as grateful as his colleagues.

Your Lordship, who is well informed of what passes in the Cabinet, must have been scarcely less astonished than the public at the late legal arrangements.[1] Every post, till of late, must have brought you from the metropolis intelligence which must have filled you with anxiety almost maturing into hope. But the lion was suddenly reported to be sick, and the jackals as suddenly grew bold. The Prime Minister consulted Sir Benjamin;[2] the Serjeant Surgeon shook his head, and they passed in trembling precipitation the paltry Rubicon of their spite. When we remember that one voice alone decided your fate, and that that voice issued from the son of Lord Grey, we seem to be recalled to the days of the Greek drama. Your Lordship, although an

[1] When the Chancellorship was put in commission.

[2] Brodie, Serjeant Surgeon to the King.

universalist, I believe, has not yet tried your hand at a tragedy, let me recommend this fresh illustration of the sublime destiny of the ancients You have deserved a better fate, but not a degrading one, though Achilles caused the destruction of Troy, we deplore his ignoble end from the unequal progeny of Priam

And is it possible,—are you indeed the man whose scathing voice, but a small lustre gone, passed like the lightning in that great Assembly where Canning grew pale before your terrible denunciation, and where even Peel still remembers your awful reply? Is this indeed the lord of sarcasm, the mighty master of invective? Is this, indeed, the identical man who took the offer of the Attorney-Generalship, and held it up to the scorn of the assembled Commons of England, and tore it, and trampled upon it, and spat upon it in their sympathising sight, and lived to offer the cold blooded aristocrat, who had dared to insult genius, the consoling compensation of the Privy Seal?

For your Lordship has a genius, good or bad, it marks you out from the slaves who crouch to an O'Connell and insult a Brougham Napoleon marched from Elba You, too,

may have your hundred days. What though they think you are dying—what though your health is quaffed in ironical bumpers in the craven secrecy of their political orgies—what if, after all, throwing Brodie on one side and your Teutonic studies on the other, your spectre appear in the House of Lords on February 4! Conceive the confusion! I can see the unaccustomed robes tremble on the dignified form of the lordly Cottenham, and his spick and span coronet fall from the obstetric brow of the baronial Bickersteth, Lansdowne taking refuge in philosophical silence, and Melbourne gulping courage in the goblets of Sion![1]

January 23, 1836.

LETTER V

To Sir Robert Peel

Sir,—Before you receive this letter you will, in all probability, have quitted the halls and bowers of Drayton; those gardens and that library where you have realised the romance of Verulam and where you enjoy 'the lettered

[1] Sion House.

leisure' that Temple loved. Your present progress to the metropolis may not be as picturesque as that which you experienced twelve months back, when the confidence of your sovereign and the hopes of your country summoned you from the galleries of the Vatican and the city of the Cæsars. It may not be as picturesque, but it is not less proud—it will be more triumphant. You are summoned now, like the Knight of Rhodes in Schiller's heroic ballad, as the only hope of a suffering island. The mighty dragon is again abroad, depopulating our fields, wasting our pleasant places, poisoning our fountains, menacing our civilisation. To-day he[1] gorges on Liverpool, to-morrow he riots at Birmingham: as he advances nearer the metropolis, terror and disgust proportionately increase. Already we hear his bellow, more awful than hyænas; already our atmosphere is tainted with the venomous aspirations of his malignant lungs; yet a little while and his incendiary crest will flame on our horizon, and we shall mark the horrors of his insatiable jaws and the scaly volume of his atrocious tail!

In your chivalry alone is our hope. Clad

[1] Daniel O'Connell

the panoply of your splendid talents and your spotless character, we feel assured that you will subdue this unnatural and unnational monster; and that we may yet see sedition, and treason, and rapine, rampant as they may have of late figured, quail before your power and prowess.

You are about to renew the combat under the most favourable auspices. When, a year ago,[1] with that devotion to your country which is your great characteristic, scorning all those refined delights of fortune which are your inheritance, and which no one is more capable of appreciating, and resigning all those pure charms of social and domestic life to which no one is naturally more attached, you threw yourself in the breach of the battered and beleaguered citadel of the constitution, you undertook the heroic enterprise with every disadvantage. The national party were as little prepared for the summons of their eminent leader by their sovereign as you yourself could have been when gazing on the frescoes of Michael Angelo. They had little organisation, less system; their hopes weak, their chieftains scattered; no communication, no correspondence. Yet they made a gallant

[1] See editorial note.

rally, and if their numerical force in the House of Commons were not equal, Sir, to your moral energy, the return of Lord Melbourne, at the best, was but a Pyrrhic triumph, nor perhaps were your powers ever sufficiently appreciated by your countrymen until you were defeated Your abandonment of office was worthy of the motives which induced you originally to accept power It was not petty pique, it was not a miserable sentiment of personal mortification, that led you to decide upon that step You retained your post until you found you were endangering the King's prerogative, to support which you had alone accepted his Majesty's confidence What a contrast does your administration as Prime Minister afford to that of one of your recent predecessors! No selfish views, no family aggrandisement, no family jobs, no nepotism It cannot be said that during your administration the public service was surfeited with the incapable offspring of the Premier, nor, after having nearly brought about a revolution for power which he has degraded, and lucre which degraded him, can it be said that you slunk into an undignified retirement with a whimpering Jeremiad over the pressure from

without.' Contrast the serene retirement of Drayton and the repentant solitude of Howick; contrast the statesman, cheered after his factious defeat by the sympathy of a nation, with the coroneted Necker, the worn-out Machiavel, wringing his helpless hands over his hearth in remorseful despair and looking up with a sigh at his scowling ancestors!

But affairs are in a very different position now from what they were in November 1835. You have an addition to the scutcheon of your fame in the emblazoned memory of your brief but masterly premiership: they cannot taunt you now with your vague promises of amelioration: you can appeal to the deeds of your Cabinet, and the plans which the applause of a nation sanctioned, and the execution of which the intrigues of a faction alone postponed. Never, too, since the peace of Paris, has the great national party of this realm been so united as at the present moment. It is no exaggeration to say, that among its leaders not the slightest difference of opinion exists upon any portion of their intended policy. Pitt himself, in the plenitude of his power, never enjoyed more cordial confidence than that which is now extended to you by every

alleged section of the Conservative ranks, all private opinions, all particular theories, have merged in the resolute determination to maintain the English constitution in spite of Irish rebels, and to support, without cavil and criticism, its eminent champion in that great course of conduct which you have expounded to them

That this admirable concord, a just subject of congratulation to the suffering people of this realm, has been in some degree the result of salutary conferences and frank explanations, I pretend not to deny, nor do I wish to conceal a circumstance in which I rejoice, that at no period have you displayed talents more calculated for the successful conduct of a great party than at the present, but, above all, this admirable concord is to be attributed to the reason, that, however individuals of the Conservative party may have occasionally differed as to the means, they have at all times invariably agreed as to the end of their system, and that end is the glory of the empire and the prosperity of the people

But it is not only among the leaders in the two Houses of Parliament that this spirit of union flourishes, it pervades the country

England has at length been completely organised; the battle which you told us must be fought in the registry courts has been fought, and in spite of the fanfaronnade of the enemy, we know it has been won. Every parliamentary election that has of late occurred, in country or in town, has proved the disciplined power of the national party. It is not that they have merely exceeded their opponents on the poll, and often by vast majorities; but they have hastened to that poll with an enthusiasm which shows that they are animated with a very different spirit to that which impels their shamefaced rivals. Contrast these important triumphs with the guerilla warfare of the Government party on town-clerks and aldermen, and be convinced how important have been our efforts in the registry courts, by their feeble yet feverish attempts at what they style Reform Associations.

If we contrast also this faithful picture of the state and spirit of the party of which you are the leader with the situation of your opponents, the difference will be striking. Between the Opposition and the Government party there is this difference; that, however certain sections of the Opposition may occasionally

have differed as to measures, their end has always been the same; whereas the several sections of the Ministerial party, while for obvious reasons they agree as to measures, avowedly adopt them because they tend to different ends. The oligarchical Whigs, the English Radicals, the Irish Repealers—the patrons of rich livings, the enemies of Church and State, hereditary magistrates, professors of county reform—the sons of the nobles, the enemies of the peerage—the landed proprietors, the advocates of free corn, can only be united in a perverted sense. Their union then is this: to a certain point they all wish to destroy; but the Whigs only wish to destroy the Tories, the Radicals the constitution, and the Repealers the empire. The seeds of constant jealousy and inevitable separation are here then prodigally sown.

What are to be the tactics of this heterogeneous band time will soon develop. Dark rumours are about which intimate conduct too infamous, some would fain think, even for the Whigs. But as for myself, history and personal observation have long convinced me that there is no public crime of which the Whigs are not capable, and no public shame which

for a sufficient consideration their oligarchical nerves would not endure. But whether they are going to betray their anti-national adherents, or only to bribe them, do you, Sir, proceed in your great course, free and undaunted. At the head of the most powerful and the most united Opposition that ever mustered on the benches opposite a trembling Minister, conscious that by returning you to your constituents he can only increase and consolidate your strength, what have you to apprehend? We look to you, therefore, with hope and with confidence. You *have a noble duty to fulfil—let it be nobly done.* You *have a great task to execute*—achieve it with a great spirit. Rescue your sovereign from an unconstitutional thraldom, rescue an august Senate which has already fought the battle of the people, rescue our National Church, which our opponents hate, our venerable constitution at which they scoff; but above all rescue that mighty body of which all these great classes and institutions are but some of the constituent and essential parts—rescue *the nation.*

January 26, 1836.

LETTER VI

To the Chancellor of the Exchequer[1]

Sir,—I really think that your celebrated compatriot, Daniel O'Rourke, when, soaring on the back of an eagle, he entered into a conversation with the man in the moon, could scarcely be more amazed than Mr. Spring Rice must be when he finds himself, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, holding a conference with the First Lord of the Treasury. Your colleagues, who, to do them justice, are perpetually apologising for your rapid promotion, account for your rocket-like rise by the unanswerable reason of your being 'a man of business!' I doubt not this is a capital recommendation to those who are not men of business; and indeed, shrewd without being sagacious, bustling without method, loquacious without eloquence, ever prompt though always superficial, and ever active though always blundering, you are exactly the sort of

[1] Mr. Spring Rice, F R S , F G S , member for Limerick until 1832 and thereafter for Cambridge, possibly the most incompetent Chancellor of the Exchequer in English history. The imperilled finances of the country were rescued in 1839 by his elevation to the Barony of Monteagle.

fussy busy-body who would impose upon and render himself indispensable to indolent and ill-informed men of strong ambition and weak minds. Cumberland,[1] who, in spite of the courtly compliments of his polished Memoirs, could be racy and significant enough in his conversation, once characterised in my presence a countryman of yours as 'a talking potato.' The race of talking potatoes is not extinct.

Your recent harangue at Cambridge was quite worthy of your reputation, and of those to whom it was addressed. Full of popular common-places and ministerial propriety, alike the devoted delegate of 'the people' and the trusty servant of the Crown, glorying in your pledges, but reminding your audience that they were voluntary, chuckling in your 'political triumph,'[2] but impressing on your friends that their 'new power' must not be used for party purposes, I can see you with Irish humour winking your eye on one side of your face as you hazard a sneer at 'the Lords,' and eulogising with solemn hypocrisy with the other half of your countenance our 'blessed constitu-

[1] Richard Cumberland, the Sir Fretful Plagiary of *The Critic*.
[2] The Municipal Corporations Act.

tion.' How choice was the style in which you propounded the future measures of the Cabinet! What heartfelt ejaculations of 'Good God, sir!' mingled with rare jargon about 'hoping and trusting!' You even ventured upon a tawdry simile, borrowed for the occasion from Mr. Sheil,[1] who, compared with his bolder and more lawless colleague, always reminds me of the fustian lieutenant, Jack Bunce, in Sir Walter's tale of the *Pirate*, contrasted with his master, the bloody buccaneer, Captain Cleveland.

You commenced your address with a due recollection of the advice of the great Athenian orator, for your action was quite striking. You clasped the horny hand of the astonished Mayor, and, full of your punch-bowl orgies, aptly alluded to your 'elevated feelings.' As for the exquisite raillery in which your graceful fancy indulged about Tory port and Whig sherry, you might perhaps have recollected that if 'old Tory port affects to be a new mixture, is ashamed of its colours, and calls itself Conservative,' that the Whig sherry has disappeared altogether, and that its place has

[1] A prominent advocate of Catholic emancipation, and a Whig.

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been deleteriously supplied by Irish whisky from an illicit still, and English Blue Ruin. Your profound metaphysics, however, may amply compensate for this infelicitous flash of jocularity. A Senator, and a Minister, and a Cabinet Minister, who gravely informs us that 'the political history of our times has shown us that there is something in human motive that pervades and extends itself to human action,' must have an eye, I suspect, to the representation of the University. This is, indeed, 'a learned Theban.' That human motives have some slight connection with human conduct, is a principle which will, no doubt, figure as an era in metaphysical discovery. The continental imputations of our shallowness in psychological investigation must certainly now be removed for ever. Neither Kant nor Helvetius can enter the arena with our rare Chancellor of the Exchequer. The fall of an apple was sufficient to reveal the secret of celestial mechanics to the musing eye of Newton, but Mr. Spring Rice for his more abstruse revelations requires a revolution or a Reform Bill. It is 'the political history of our times' that has proved the connection between motives and actions. The Chancel-

lor of the Exchequer must have arrived at this discovery by the recollection of the very dignified and honourable conduct to which the motives of power and place have recently impelled himself and his friends. I cannot help fancying that this display of yours at Cambridge may hereafter be adduced as irrefutable evidence that there is at least one portion of the Irish Protestant population which has not received '*adequate instruction.*'

It seems that you and your Katerfelto crew are going to introduce some very wonderful measures *to the notice* of the impending Parliament. And, first of all, you are about to 'remedy the still existing grievances to which the great dissenting bodies are subject.' 'Good God! sir,' as you would say, are you driven to this? The still existing grievances of the Dissenters! Do you and your beggarly Cabinet yet live upon these sores? Dissenting grievances are like Stilton cheeses and Damascus sabres, never found in the places themselves, though there is always some bustling huckster or other who will insure you a supply. 'The still existing grievances of the Dissenters,' if they exist at all, exist only because, after four years of incapacity, you and your

clumsy coadjutors could not contrive to remove and remedy what Sir Robert Peel could have achieved, but for your faction, in four days.

Then we are to proceed in 'our great work of the reform of the Courts of Equity.' I 'hope and trust' not. What! after creating the Court of Review, the laughing-stock of the profession; after having at length succeeded in obtaining a second-rate Lord Chancellor[1] at the expense of four coronets, whose services might have been secured without the waste of one; after having caused more delay, more expense, more mortification and ruin in eight months of reform than the annals of the Court can offer in a similar period in the worst days of its management—still must you amend! Spare us, good sir; be content with your last achievements of law reform; be content with having, by your corporation magistrates, made for the first time in England since the days o Charles II., the administration of justice matter of party. Will not even this satis the Whig lechery for mischief?

Then, 'Ireland must be tranquillised.' S I think. Feed the poor, hang the agitato That will do it. But that's not your w

1 Lord Cottenham.

It is the destruction of the English and Protestant interest that is the Whig specific for Irish tranquillity. And do you really flatter yourself, because an eccentric course of circumstances has metamorphosed an Irish adventurer into the Chancellor of the English Exchequer, that the spirited people of this island will allow you to proceed with impunity in your projected machinations? Rest assured, Sir, your career draws rapidly to a close. Providence, that for our sins and the arrogance of our flush prosperity has visited this once great and glorious empire with five years of Whig government, is not implacable. Our God is a God of mercy as well as justice. We may have erred, but we have been chastened. And Athens, when ruled by a Disdar Aga, who was the deputy of the chief of the eunuchs at Constantinople, was not so contemptible as England governed by a Limerick lawyer—the deputy of an Irish rebel!

Prepare, then, for your speedy and merited dismissal. It is amusing to fancy what may be the resources of your Cabinet in their permanent retirement. The First Lord of the Treasury, in all probability, will betake himself to Brocket, and compose an epilogue for the

drama just closed. Your Lord Chancellor may retire to his native village, like a returned cheese. Lord John, perhaps, will take down his dusty lyre, and console us for having starved Coleridge by pouring forth a monody to his memory. As for the polished Palmerston and the pious Grant, and the other trading statesmen of easy virtue—for them it would be advisable, I think, at once to erect a political Magdalen Hospital. Solitude and spare diet, and some salutary treatises of the English constitution, may, after a considerable interval, capacitate them for re-entering public life, and even filling with an approximation to obscure respectability some of the lower offices of the State. But, Sir, for yourself, with your 'business-like talents,' which must not be hid under a bushel, it appears to me that it would be both the wisest and the kindest course to entrust to your charge and instruction a class of beings who, in their accomplishments and indefatigableness, alike in their physical and moral qualities, not a little resemble you—the INDUSTRIOUS FLEAS.

January 28, 1836.

LETTER VII

To Lord John Russell[1]

My Lord,—Your name will descend to posterity—you have burnt your Ephesian temple But great deeds are not always achieved by great men Your character is a curious one, events have proved that it has been imperfectly comprehended, even by your own party Long and, for a period, intimate opportunities of observing you will enable me, if I mistake not, to enter into its just analysis

You were born with a strong ambition and a feeble intellect It is an union not uncommon, and in the majority of cases only tends to convert an aspiring youth into a querulous and discontented manhood But under some circumstances—when combined, for instance, with great station, and consequent opportunities of action—it is an union which often leads to the development of a peculiar talent—the talent of political mischief

When you returned from Spain, the solitary

[1] This letter chiefly turns on the internal intrigues by which Lord Grey's 1834 Cabinet fell to pieces in 1834 Russell was one of the anti Grey faction

life of travel and the inspiration of a romantic country acting upon your ambition, had persuaded you that you were a great poet; your intellect, in consequence, produced the feeblest tragedy in our language. The reception of *Don Carlos* only convinced your ambition that your imaginative powers had been improperly directed. Your ambition sought from prose-fiction the fame which had been denied to your lyre; and your intellect in consequence produced the feeblest romance in our literature.[1] Not deterred by the unhappy catastrophe of the fair maid of Arrouca, your ambition sought consolation in the notoriety of political literature, and your intellect in due time produced the feeblest political essay on record.[2] Your defence of close boroughs, however, made this volume somewhat popular with the Whigs, and flushed with the compliments of Holland House, where hitherto you had been treated with more affection than respect, your ambition resolved on rivalling the fame of Hume and Gibbon. Your *Memoirs of the Affairs of Europe*, published with pompous parade in

[1] *The Nun of Arrouca.*

[2] *The Causes of the French Revolution.*

successive quarto volumes, retailed in frigid sentences a feeble compilation from the gossip of those pocket tomes of small talk which abound in French literature. Busied with the tattle of valets and waiting-maids, you accidentally omitted in your *Memoirs of the Affairs of Europe* all notice of its most vast and most rising empire. This luckless production closed your literary career; you flung down your futile pen in incapable despair; and your feeble intellect having failed in literature, your strong ambition took refuge in politics.

You had entered the House of Commons with every adventitious advantage—an illustrious birth, and the support of an ancient and haughty party. I was one of the audience who assisted at your first appearance, and I remember the cheering attention that was extended to you. Cold, inanimate, with a weak voice and a mincing manner, the failure of your intellect was complete; but your ambition wrestled for a time with the indifference of your opponents and the ill-concealed contempt of your friends.

Having, then, failed alike in both these careers which in this still free country are open

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to genius, you subsided for some years into a state of listless moroseness which was even pitiable. Hitherto your political opinions had been mild and moderate, and, if partial, at least constitutional; but, as is ever the case with persons of your temperament, despairing of yourself, you began to despair of your country. This was the period when among your intimates you talked of retiring from that public life in which you had not succeeded in making yourself public, when you paced, like a feeble Catiline, the avenues of Holland House; and when the most brilliant poet of the day, flattered by your friendship, addressed you a remonstrance in which your pique figured as patriotism and your ambition was elevated to genius.

Your friends,—I speak of the circle in which you lived[1]—superficial judges of human character as well as of everything else, always treated you with a species of contempt, which doubtless originated in their remembrance of your failure and their conviction of your feebleness. Lord Grey, *only five years ago*, would not even condescend to offer you a seat in the Cabinet, and affected to state that,

[1] The Holland House coterie.

in according you a respectable office, he had been as much influenced by the state of your finances as of your capacity Virtual Prime Minister of England at this moment, you have repaid Lord Grey for his flattering estimate and his friendly services, and have afforded him, *in your present career, some curious meditations* for his uneasy solitude, where he wanders, like the dethroned Caliph in the halls of Eblis, with a quivering hand pressed upon his aching heart

A finer observer of human nature than that forlorn statesman might have recognised at this crisis in a noble with an historic name and no fortune, a vast ambition and a balked career, and soured, not to say malignant, from disappointment, some prime materials for the leader of a revolutionary faction Those materials have worked well You have already banished your great leader, you have struck down the solemn idol which you yourself assisted in setting up for the worship of a deluded people, you have exiled from the Cabinet, by your dark and dishonourable intrigues, every man of talent who could have held you in check, and, placing in the seat of nominal leadership an indolent epicurean,

you rule this country by a coalition with an Irish rebel, and with a council of colleagues in which you have united the most inefficient members of your own party with the Palmerstons and Grants, the Swiss statesmen, the *condottieri* of the political world, the 'British legion' of public life.

A miniature Mokanna, you are now exhaling upon the constitution of your country which you once eulogised, and its great fortunes of which you once were proud, all that long-hoarded venom and all those distempered humours that have for years accumulated in your petty heart and tainted the current of your mortified life—your aim is to reduce everything to your own mean level—to degrade everything to your malignant standard. Partially you have succeeded. You have revenged yourself upon the House of Lords, the only obstacle to your degenerating schemes, by denouncing with a frigid conceit worthy of 'Don Carlos,' its solemn suffrage as 'the whisper of a faction,' and hallooing on, in a flimsy treble, your Scotch and Irish desperadoes to assail its august independence. You have revenged yourself upon the sovereign who recoiled from your

touch, by kissing, in spite of his royal soul, his outraged hand Notwithstanding your base powers and your father's fagot votes, the gentlemen of England inflicted upon you an indelible brand, and expelled you from your own county,[1] and you have revenged yourself upon their indignant patriotism by depriving them of their noblest and most useful privileges, and making, for the first time since the reign of Charles II, the administration of justice the business of faction In all your conduct it is not difficult to detect the workings of a mean and long-mortified spirit suddenly invested with power—the struggles of a strong ambition attempting, by a wanton exercise of authority, to revenge the disgrace of a feeble intellect

But, my Lord, rest assured that yours is a mind which, if it succeeded in originating, is not destined to direct, a revolution Whatever may be the issue of the great struggle now carrying on in this country, whether we may be permitted to be again great, glorious, and free, or whether we be doomed to sink beneath the ignoble tyranny which your machinations are preparing for us, your part

[1] South Devon

in the mighty drama must soon close. To suppose that, with all your efforts and all your desperation, to suppose that, with all the struggles of your ambition to supply the deficiency of your intellect, your Lordship, in those heroic hours when empires are destroyed or saved, is fated to be anything else than an instrument, is to suppose that which contradicts all the records of history and all our experience of human nature.

I think it is Macrobius who tells a story of a young Greek, who, having heard much of the wealth and wisdom of Egypt, determined on visiting that celebrated land. When he beheld the pyramids of Memphis and the gates of Thebes, he exclaimed, 'O wonderful men! what must be your gods!' Full of the memory of the glorious divinities of his own poetic land, the blooming Apollo and the bright Diana, the awful beauty of the Olympian Jove and the sublime grace of the blue-eyed Athena, he entered the temples of the Pharaohs. But what was his mingled astonishment and disgust when he found a nation prostrate before the most contemptible and the most odious of created beings! The gods of Egypt are the Ministers of England.

I can picture to myself an intelligent foreigner, attracted by the fame of our country, and visiting it for the first time I can picture to myself his admiration when he beholds our great public works, our roads, our docks, our canals, our unrivalled manufactories, our matchless agriculture That admiration would not be diminished when he learnt that we were free, when he became acquainted with our social comfort, and our still equal laws 'O! wonderful men,' he would exclaim, 'what must be your governors!' But conceive him now, entered into our political temple, conceive his appalled astonishment as he gazes on the ox-like form of the Lansdowne Apis On one side he beholds an altar raised to an ape, on the other incense is burned before a cat-like colleague Here placed in the shapes of Palmerston and Grant, the worship of two sleek and long-tailed rats, and then learns, with amazement, that the Lord Chancellor of this great land is an onion or a cheese Towering above all, and resting on a lurid shrine bedewed with blood and encircled with flame, with distended jaws and colossal tail, is the grim figure of the O'Connell crocodile But, my Lord, how

thunderstruck must be our visitor when he is told to recognise a Secretary of State in an infinitely small scarabæus;—yes, my Lord, when he learns that you are the leader of the English House of Commons, our traveller may begin to comprehend how the Egyptians worshipped—AN INSECT.

January 30, 1836.

LETTER VIII

To the People

This is the first direct address that has ever been made to the real people of England. For the last few years, a gang of scribblers, in the pay of a desperate faction, have cloaked every incendiary appeal that they have vomited forth to any section of your numbers, however slight, or however opposed to the honour and happiness of the nation, by elevating the object of their solicitude into that imposing aggregate, the people. Thus have they played, for their ulterior purposes, dissenting sects against the National Church, manufacturing towns against agricultural districts, the House of Commons against the House of Lords, new burgesses

against ancient freemen, and finally, the Papists against the Protestants With scarcely an exception, you may invariably observe, that in advocating the cause of the people' these writers have ever stimulated the anti national passions of the minority But, in addressing you now, I address myself in very truth to the English people—to all orders and conditions of men that form that vast society, from the merchant to the mechanic, and from the peer to the peasant

You are still a great people You are still in the possession and enjoyment of the great results of civilisation, in spite of those who would destroy your internal prosperity Your flag still floats triumphant in every division of the globe, in spite of the menaces of dismemberment that threaten your empire from every quarter Neither domestic nor foreign agitation has yet succeeded in uprooting your supremacy But how long this imperial integrity may subsist, when it is the object of a faction in your own land to array great classes of your population in hostile collision, and when from the Castle of Dublin to the Castle of Quebec, your honour is tampered with by the deputies of your sovereign, is a question

which well deserves your quick and earnest consideration.

In the mesh of unparalleled difficulties in which your affairs are now entangled, who are your guides? Are they men in whose wisdom and experience, in whose virtue and talents, principle and resolution, in whose acknowledged authority and unblemished honour, and deserved celebrity, you are justified in reposing your hopes and entrusting your confidence? Lucian once amused the ancients with an auction of their gods. Let us see what Mr. George Robins might think of an auction of your Ministers. The catalogue may soon be run over.

A Prime Minister in an easy-chair, reading a French novel. What think you of that lot? Three Secretaries of State, one odious, another contemptible, the third both. They have their price, yet I would not be their purchaser. A new Lord Chancellor, like a new cheese, crude and flavourless: second-rate as a lawyer, as a statesman a nonentity, bought in by his own party from sheer necessity. A President of the India Board, recovering from the silence of years imposed upon him by Canning, by the inspiration of that eloquent man's

chair which he now fills. As we are still a naval nation, our First Lord of the Admiralty should be worth something; but, unfortunately, nobody knows his name. The President of the Council has always indicated a tendency to join any Government, and therefore should be a marketable article enough. In Egypt, where their favourite food are pumpkins that have run to seed, such a solid and mature intelligence might be worth exporting to the Divan. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, being 'a man of business,' would doubtless fetch 'a long figure;' refer for character to the mercantile deputations who leave the Treasury after an interview, bursting with laughter from sheer admiration of his knowledge and capacity. Lord Howick,[1] who is a Minister on the same principle that the son of an old partner is retained in the firm to keep together the connection, might command a price on this score, were it not notorious that his parent has withdrawn with his person, his capital, and confidence. The remainder may be thrown into one lot, and the auction concluded with the item on the Dutch system.

Were the destinies of a great people ever yet

[1] Son of Earl Grey

entrusted to such a grotesque and Hudibrastic crew? Why, we want no candid confessions or triumphant revelations from Mr. Sheil; we want no audacious apostacy of a whole party to teach us how such a truckling rout governs England. They govern England as the mock dynasties governed Europe in the time of the Revolution, by a process as sure and as simple, as desperate and as degrading, by being the delegates of an anti-national power. And what is this power beneath whose sirocco breath the fame of England is fast withering? Were it the dominion of another conqueror, another bold bastard with his belted sword, we might gnaw the fetter which we could not burst; were it the genius of Napoleon with which we were again struggling, we might trust the issue to the God of battles with a sainted confidence in our good cause and our national energies: but we are sinking beneath a power, before which the proudest conquerors have grown pale, and by which the nations most devoted to freedom have become enslaved, the power of a foreign priesthood.

The Pope may be an old man, or an old woman, once the case, but the Papacy is inde-

pendent of the Pope The insignificance of the Pope is adduced by your enemies as evidence of the insignificance of the Papacy 'Tis the fatal fallacy by which they mean to ride roughshod over England Is the Pope less regarded now than when Bourbon sacked Rome? Yet that exploit preceded the mas sacre of St Bartholomew and the revocation of the Edict of Nantes The Constable of Bourbon lived before Sir Phelim O'Neale The Papacy is as rampant now in Ireland as it was in Europe in the time of Gregory, and all its energies *are* directed to your humiliation

Who is this man whose name is ever on your lips? Who is this O'Connell? He is the feed advocate of the Irish priesthood, he is the hired instrument of the Papacy That is his precise position Your enemies, that wretched anti national faction who wish to retain power, or creep into place, by clinging to the skirts of this foreign rebel, taunt those who would expose his destructive arts and unmask the purpose of his desperate principals with the wretched scoff, that we make him of importance by our notice He cannot be of more importance than he is Demoralised

entrusted to such a grotesque and Hudibrastic crew? Why, we want no candid confessions or triumphant revelations from Mr. Sheil; we want no audacious apostacy of a whole party to teach us how such a truckling rout governs England. They govern England as the mock dynasties governed Europe in the time of the Revolution, by a process as sure and as simple, as desperate and as degrading, by being the delegates of an anti-national power. And what is this power beneath whose sirocco breath the fame of England is fast withering? Were it the dominion of another conqueror, another bold bastard with his belted sword, we might gnaw the fetter which we could not burst; were it the genius of Napoleon with which we were again struggling, we might trust the issue to the God of battles with a sainted confidence in our good cause and our national energies: but we are sinking beneath a power, before which the proudest conquerors have grown pale, and by which the nations most devoted to freedom have become enslaved, the power of a foreign priesthood.

The Pope may be an old man, or an old woman, once the case, but the Papacy is inde-

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in character, desperate in fortunes, infinitely over-estimated in talents, he is the most powerful individual in the world because he is entrusted with the delegated influence of the greatest power in existence. But because an individual exercises a great power, it does not follow that he is a great man. O'Connell is not yet as great as Robespierre, although he resembles that terrific agitator in everything except his disinterestedness. Robespierre presided over public safety as O'Connell over Reform. A precious foster-dam! Would it have been any answer to those who would have struggled against the great insurer of public security, that his intended victims made him of importance by their notice? Would it have been endured that these deprecators of resistance should have urged, 'He is not a Cæsar, he is not an Alexander, he has no amplitude of mind, he is not a great genius; let him go on murdering, you make him of importance by noticing his career of blood and havoc!'

This man, O'Connell, is the hired instrument of the Papacy; as such, his mission is to destroy your Protestant society, and, as such, he is a more terrible enemy to England than

Napoleon, with all his inspiration Your empire and your liberties are in more danger at this moment than when the army of invasion was encamped at Boulogne

Now we have a precise idea of the political character of O'Connell And I have often marvelled when I have listened to those who have denounced his hypocrisy or admired his skill, when they have read of the triumphant demagogue humbling himself in the mud before a simple priest There was no hypocrisy in this, no craft The agent recognised his principal, the slave bowed before his lord, and when he pressed to his lips those sacred robes, reeking with whisky and redolent of incense, I doubt not that his soul was filled at the same time with unaffected awe and devout gratitude

If we have correctly fixed his political character, let us see whether we can as accurately estimate his intellectual capacity and his moral qualities The hired writers would persuade you that he is a great man He has not a single quality of a great man In proportion as he was so gifted, he would be less fitted for the part which he has to perform There is a sublime sentiment in

genius, even when uncontrolled by principle, that would make it recoil with nausea from what this man has to undergo. He is shrewd, vigorous, versatile; with great knowledge of character, little of human nature; with that reckless dexterity which confounds weak minds, and that superficial readiness that masters vulgar passions; energetic from the certainty of his own desperate means, and from the strong stimulus of his provisional remuneration; inexhaustible in unprincipled expedients, and audacious in irresponsible power; a *nisi prius* lawyer, with the soul of a demagogue. That is the man. He is as little a great orator as a great man. He has not a single quality of a great orator except a good voice. I defy his creatures to produce a single passage from any speech he ever delivered illumined by a single flash of genius, or tinctured with the slightest evidence of taste, or thought, or study. Learning he has none; little reading. His style in speaking, as in writing, is ragged, bald, halting, disjointed. He has no wit, though he may claim his fair portion of that Milesian humour which every one inherits who bears a hod. His pathos is the stage sentiment of a barn;

his invective is slang When he aspires to the higher style of rhetoric, he is even ludicrous He snatches up a bit of tinsel, a tawdry riband, or an artificial flower, and mixes it with his sinewy commonplace and his habitual soot, like a chimney sweep on May-day

Of his moral character it might be enough to say, that he is a systematic liar and a beggarly cheat, a swindler and a poltroon But of O'Connell you can even say more His public and his private life are equally profligate, he has committed every crime that does not require courage the man who plunders the peasant can also starve his child He has denounced your national character and insulted your national honour He has said that all your men are cowards and all your women wantons He has reviled your illustrious princes—he has sneered at your pure religion—he has assailed your National Church He has endeavoured to stir up rebellion against your august Senate, and has described your House of Commons, even when reformed, as an assembly of 'six hundred scoundrels' Everything which is established comes under his ban, because everything which is established

is an obstacle to the purpose for which he is paid—the destruction of everything which is ENGLISH.

February 2, 1836.

LETTER IX

To Lord Stanley[1]

My Lord,—The classical historian of our country[2] said of your great ancestor that 'the Countess of Derby had the glory of being the *last* person in the three kingdoms, and in all their dependent dominions, who submitted to the victorious rebels.' Charlotte de la Trémouille[3] was a woman who might have shamed the degenerate men of the present day; but your Lordship may claim, with a slight though significant alteration, the eulogium of that illustrious princess. The rebels are again victorious, and to your Lordship's lasting honour, you have been the *first* to resist their treasonable authority.

[1] Lord Stanley had crossed from the Whigs to Sir Robert Peel, but had refused office under him.
[2] Hume.
[3] Countess of Derby, who stood the sieges of Lathom House by Fairfax in 1644-5.

Never has a statesman yet been placed in a position so difficult and so trying as the present heir of the house of Derby; never has a statesman under similar circumstances yet conducted himself with more discretion and more courage. When the acerbities of faction have passed away, posterity will do justice to your disinterestedness and devotion, and the future historian of England will record with sympathising admiration the greatness of your sacrifice.

If the gratification of your ambition had been your only object, your course was clear. Less than three years ago the Whigs, and loudest among them my Lord Melbourne, announced you as the future Prime Minister of England. Young, of high lineage, of illustrious station, and of immaculate character and unquestionably their ablest orator—among your own party you had no rival. They looked upon you as the only man who could at the same time maintain their power and effectually resist the machinations of those who would equally destroy the constitution and dismember the empire. With what enthusiastic cheers did they not greet the winged words with which you assailed the anti-national

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enemy when you rose in the House like a young eagle, and dashed back his treason in the baffled countenance of the priestly delegate!

Who could believe that the same men who cheered you in the House, and chuckled over your triumphs in their coteries, should now be the truckling slaves of the sacerdotal power from whose dark influence they then shrank with disgust and terror? Who could believe that the projected treason of these very men should have driven you and your high-minded colleagues from the contagion of their councils? Who could believe that the famous 'Reform Ministry,' that packed a Parliament by bellowing 'gratitude to Lord Grey' throughout the empire, should finally have expelled that same Lord Grey from his seat, under circumstances of revolting insult; that the very Lord Melbourne who had always indicated yourself as Lord Grey's successor, should himself have slid into that now sullied seat, where he maintains himself in indolent dependence by a foul alliance with the very man whom he had previously denounced as a traitor? Can the records of public life, can the secret archives of private profligacy, afford a parallel instance of

conduct so base, so completely degrading, so thoroughly demoralised?

You, my Lord, preferred your honour to your interest, the prosperity of your native land to the gratification of your ambition. You sacrificed without a pang the proudest station in your country, to prove to your countrymen that public principle was not yet a jest. You did well. The pulse of our national character was beating low. We required some great example to rebrace the energies of our honour. From the moment that you denounced this disgusting thraldom and the base expedients of your chicaning colleagues, a better feeling pervaded England and animated Englishmen. In this sharp exigency you did not forget your duty to yourself as well as to your country. Yours was no Coriolanus part, neither the taunts of the recent supporters who had betrayed you, nor the ready compliments of your former adversaries, tempted you to swerve for a moment from the onward path of a severe and peremptory principle. When Sir Robert Peel was summoned to the helm, in the autumn of 1834, your position was indeed most painful. Your honour and your duty seemed at conflict. You reconciled

them. You supported the policy while you declined the power.

These, my Lord, are great deeds. They will live. The defence of Lathom was not more heroic. They will live in the admiration and the gratitude of an ancient and honourable nation, ever ready to sympathise with the pure and noble, and prompt to recognise a natural leader in blood that is mingled with all the traditionary glories of their race.

You had now placed your character above suspicion. The most virulent of the hired writers of the faction did not dare to impugn the purity of your motives. You had satisfied the most morbid claims of an honour which the worldly only might deem too chivalrous. When, therefore, I find you at length avowedly united with that eminent man, on whom the hopes of his country rest with a deserving and discerning confidence, and who, in his parliamentary talents, his proud station, and his unsullied fame, is worthy of your alliance, I was rejoiced, but not surprised. It is a fit season to 'stand together in your chivalry.' The time is ripe for union and fair for concord. When, some days back, in my letter to Sir bert Peel—a letter, let me observe in pass-

ing, written by one whose name, in spite of the audacious licence of frantic conjecture, has never yet been even intimated, can never be discovered, and will never be revealed—I announce the fact that the great Conservative party was at length completely united, it was a declaration equivalent to England being saved The debates upon the address have proved the accuracy of my information The hired writers and the place hunting dependents of the priestly junta triumph over the division in the Commons, they might have read their knell in the voice of the tellers. They assure us, with solemn or with sparkling countenance, that they did not reckon upon a moiety of such a majority. And do they indeed think that the people of England care one jot whether there be ten or twenty traitors more or less in the House of Commons? It is not a miserable majority in that assembly, either way, that will destroy or preserve the empire. That very debate, my Lord, over the result of which these short-sighted desperadoes affect to triumph, sealed the doom of the faction and announced the salvation of the country. It will fill every loyal and discerning throughout England with more than

Whatever the hired writers and the expectant runners may bawl or scribble, that division numbered the days of the present Cabinet. And they know it. The sacerdotal delegates know full well that the moment the Conservatives are united, the priestly plot is baffled.

When the First Lord of the Treasury was reinstalled in the office which he won by so patriotic a process, and which he fills with such diligent ability, shrinking from the contamination of O'Connell, the very mention of whose name in his private circle makes him even now tremble with compunctious rage, he declared that affairs might be carried on without 'the victorious rebels,' from the mere disunion of the Conservative camp. No one was more completely aware than his Lordship that the moment that disunion ceased, his authority must tremble. To perpetuate distrust and to excite division among the different sections of the Conservative party all the energies of the anti-English cabal have of late been directed. The Municipal Bill filled them with a fluttering hope; a severance between the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel was announced as inevitable.

To-day a great commoner and a learned lord no longer meet, to-morrow the appropriation clause is to be got rid of by some new juggle, and your Lordship and your fellow leaders are to return to the tainted benches of the Treasury Now the conferences at Drayton hang fire, their midnight visits from illustrious Princes bode splits and schisms We have scarcely recovered from the effect of a suspicious dinner, when our attention is promptly directed to a mysterious call The debates on the address have laid for ever these restless spectres of the disordered imagination of a daunted yet desperate faction In a Peel, a Stanley, a Wellington, and a Lyndhurst, the people of England recognise their fitting leaders Let the priestly party oppose to these the acrid feebleness of a Russell and the peurile common place of a Howick, Melbourne's experienced energy, and Lansdowne's lucid perception!

February 6, 1836

LETTER X

To Lord William Bentinck[1]

My Lord,—I have just read your Lordship's Address to the Electors of the City of Glasgow; and, when I remember that the author of this production has been entrusted for no inconsiderable period with the government of 100,000,000 of human beings, I tremble. I say not this with reference to the measures of which you have there announced yourself the advocate, but to the *manner* in which that announcement is expressed. It implies, in my opinion, at the same time, a want of honesty and a want of sense.

This Address to the Electors of the City of Glasgow is made by an individual who has been employed for more than a quarter of a century by his sovereign in foreign service of the utmost importance, ascending, at last, even to the Viceregal throne of India; he is a

[1] Lord William Bentinck's career included the Lieutenant-Governorship of Madras, the command of a brigade at Coruna, the English ministry at the Court of Naples, and command of the Neapolitan Army, the Governor-Generalship of India, all of which positions he filled with energy and distinction.

member of a family of the highest rank and consideration, and some very persevering paragraphs in the Government journals have of late sedulously indicated him as a fit and future member of Lord Melbourne's Cabinet Your Lordship, therefore, is a very considerable personage, the public are familiar with your name, if not with your career, they are instructed to believe you an individual of great mark and likelihood, of great promise as well as of great performance, as one who is not unwilling to devote to their interests at home all those talents which have been so long exercised, and all that experience which has been so laboriously obtained, in their service in other and distant lands 'Tis distance lends enchantment to the view, sings a bard[1] of that city which your Lordship is to represent, 'tis distance which has invested your Lordship with the haze of celebrity, but I doubt whether the shadowy illusion will be long proof against that nearer inspection and more familiar experience of your judgment and capacity, which your Lordship has favoured us with in your Address to the Electors of the City of Glasgow

[1] Campbell

There are some, indeed, who affirm—and those, too, persons of no mean authority—that this address may even be considered a manifesto of the least constitutional portion of the Cabinet to whom your Lordship and my Lord Durham are speedily to afford all the weight of your influence and all the advantage of your wisdom. How this may be, events will prove; the effusion is certainly sufficiently marked by the great characteristic of the Whig-Radical school; a reckless readiness to adopt measures, of the details and consequences of which they are obviously, and often avowedly ignorant.

The address itself consists of fourteen paragraphs. In the first your Lordship informs us that you come forward in consequence of 'a very numerous requisition.' What 'a very numerous requisition,' by-the-bye, may be, I pretend not to decipher. It may be Hindostanee; It may be Sanscrit; it is not English. With a modesty natural to an Oriental Viceroy, the late Master of the Great Mogul, you then make your salaam to the electors, assuring them that but for this very numerous requisition you 'could not have ventured to aspire to the high distinction of representing Glasgow in

Parliaments,'[1] although you ingenuously allow that you 'have had no occasion seriously to consider the subject;' and that you are partial to the 'extension of the suffrage,' into the details of which, however, 'you candidly admit you have never entered!' Admirable specimen of the cautious profundity of the Whig Radicalism! Inimitable statesman, who busied with concocting constitutions for Sicily, and destroying *empires in India*, can naturally spare but few hours to the consideration of the unimportant *topics of domestic policy*.

Your decisive judgment, however, on the subject of the ballot will clear your Lordship in a moment from any silly suspicion of superficiality. This paragraph is so rich and rare, that it merits the dangerous honour of a quotation :—

'I am opposed to the vote by ballot ; I consider *it a* complete illusion. It will not destroy the exercise of undue influence, but it will give rise to another *influenc* still *more* pernicious, that of money and corruption, against which *there is no security* but in publicity. At the same time, as the vote *by ballot* affects no existing right, I would willingly acquiesce in the general wishes of my constituents, to vote for it as an experimental and temporary measure.'

[1] The Septennial Act, passed in 1715 was a Whig Act.

member for Middlesex has at length found in the future member for Glasgow a rival in the elegance of his language and the precision of his ideas.

But now for your masterpiece! 'The Corn Laws are a difficult question; I am for their abolition.' How exquisitely does this sentence paint your weak and puzzled mind and your base and grovelling spirit! Confessing at the same time your inability to form an opinion, yet gulping down the measure to gain the seat. Space alone prevents me from following the noble candidate for Glasgow through the remainder of his address, admirably characteristic as it is of the same mixture of a perplexed intellect and a profligate ambition.

My Lord, I have not the honour of your acquaintance; I bear you no personal ill-will. I stop not here to inquire into the proceedings of your former life—of your Sicilian freaks or of your Spanish exploits, or of your once impending catastrophe in India. I form my opinion of your character from your last public act, and believing as I do, that there is a conspiracy on foot to palm you off on the nation as a great man, in order that your less

Irish Church reform 'imperfect and insufficient.' He is, 'of course,' for a complete reform of the Irish corporations. He is for short parliaments, he is for[1] the ballot, he is for extension of the suffrage, he is for the abolition of the corn laws, the virtual annihilation of the House of Lords, and the gradual destruction of all alliance between the Church and the State. What more can you require? His Sicilian constitution?

It would, however, be disingenuous to conceal that there is at the conclusion of your Lordship's address a sentence which almost leads one to impute its production to other causes than the impulse of a party or the original weakness of your character. It appears that 'a long and severe illness drove you from India,' and even now incapacitates you from personally soliciting the suffrages of your choice constituents. Have, then, the republican electors of Glasgow, eager to be represented by a Lord, selected for their champion in the Senate one of those mere lees of debilitated humanity and exhausted nature which the winds of India and the waves of the Atlantic periodically waft to the hopeless

[1] For 'for' read 'against.'

breezes of their native cliffs? The address is ominous, and perhaps, ere the excitement of a session may have passed, congenial Cheltenham will receive, from now glorious Glasgow, the antiquated Governor and the drivelling Nabob!

February 11, 1836

LETTER XI

To Viscount Palmerston

My Lord,—The Minister who maintains himself in power[1] in spite of the contempt of a whole nation must be gifted with no ordinary capacity Your Lordship's talents have never had justice done to them Permit me to approach you in the spirit of eulogy, if novelty have charms, this encomium must gratify you Our language commands no expression of scorn which has not been exhausted in the celebration of your character, there is no conceivable idea of degradation which has not

[1] Palmerston served with the exception of the four months of the Peel 1834 1835 administration as Secretary for Foreign Affairs from 1830–1841

been, at some period or another, associated with your career. Yet the seven Prime Ministers, all of whom you have served with equal fidelity, might suffice, one would think, with their united certificates, to vamp up the first; and as for your conduct, so distinguished an orator as your Lordship has recently turned out, can never want a medium for its triumphant vindication, even if it were denied the columns of that favoured journal where we occasionally trace the *finished flippancy* of your Lordship's airy pen.

The bigoted Tories[1] under whose auspices your Lordship entered public life had always, *if I mistake* not, some narrow-minded misgiving of your honesty as well as your talents, and with characteristic *illiberality* doomed you to official insignificance. It was generally understood that under no circumstances was *your* Lordship ever to be *permitted to enter* the Cabinet. Had you been an anticipated Aislabie,[2] you could not have been more

[1] Palmerston served in Tory ministries as Junior Lord of the Admiralty, and as Secretary at War, which part he continued to hold in Canning's administration of 1827. After Canning's death and Goderich's short tenure of office, he went over with the Canningites to the Duke of Wellin[illegible] party until the split in May, 1828.

[2] Aislabie was Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1721, and [illegible] in consequence of his connection with the South Sea Bu[illegible]

rigidly excluded from that select society, you were rapidly advanced to a position which, though eminent, was also subordinate; and having attained this acme of second-rate statesmanship, you remained fixed on your pedestal for years, the Great Apollo of aspiring understrappers.

When the ambition of Mr. Canning deprived him of the ablest of his colleagues, your Lordship, with that dexterity which has never deserted you, and which seems a happy compound of the smartness of an attorney's clerk and the intrigue of a Greek of the Lower Empire, wriggled yourself into the vacant Cabinet. The Minister who was forced to solicit the co-operation of a Lansdowne might be pardoned for accepting the proffer of a Palmerston; but even in his extreme distress, Mr. Canning was careful not to promote you from your subordinate office; nor can I conceive a countenance of more black dismay, if that brilliant rhetorician, while wandering in the Elysian fields, were to learn that his favourite portfolio was now in your Lordship's protocolic custody.[1]

A member of Mr. Canning's Ca

[1] The Foreign Office.

necessity, you became a member of the Duke of Wellington's by sufferance. You were expelled from your office for playing a third-rate part in a third-rate intrigue.[1] Your Lordship was piqued, and revenged yourself on your country by becoming a Whig. I remember when, in old days, you addressed the Speaker on our side of the House, your oratorical displays were accompanied not only by the blushes, but even the hesitation of youth. These might have been esteemed the not unpleasing characteristics of an ingenuous modesty, had they not been associated with a callous confidence of tone and an offensive flippancy of language, which proved that they were rather the consequence of a want of breeding than of a deficiency of self-esteem. The leader of the Whig Opposition was wont to say, in return perhaps for some of those pasquinades with which you were then in the habit of squibbing your present friends, that your Lordship reminded him of a favourite footman on easy terms with his mistress. But no sooner had you changed your party than all Brooks's announced you as an orator.

[1] Palmerston was Secretary for Foreign Affairs in the Duke of Wellington's Cabinet from 1830 to 1834, during which time he attempted to convert his leader to a Canningite policy.

interest in our domestic policy, that little time could be spared by the nation to a criticism of your Lordship's labours. During the agitation of Parliamentary Reform your career resembled the last American war in the midst of the revolutions of Europe: it was very disgraceful, but never heard of. Occasionally, indeed, rumours reached the ear of the nation of the Russians being at Constantinople, or the French in Italy and Flanders. Sometimes we were favoured with a report of the effective blockade of our ancient allies, the Dutch; occasionally of the civil wars you had successfully excited in the Peninsula, which we once delivered from a foreign enemy.[1] But when life and property were both at stake, when the Trades' Unions were marching through the streets of the metropolis in battle-array, and Bristol was burning, your countrymen might be excused for generally believing that your Lordship's career was as insignificant as your intellect.[2]

But your saturnalia of undetected scrapes and unpunished blunders is now over. The

[1] A reference to the British Legion.

[2] Canning declared that he could not 'drag that three-decker Palmerston into action' save where his department was concerned.

affairs of the Continent obtrude themselves upon our consideration like an importunate creditor who will no longer be denied There is no party-cry at home to screen your foreign exploits from critical attention The author of the *New Whig Guide*[1] may scribble silly articles in newspapers about justice to Ireland, but he will not succeed in diverting public notice from the painful consequences of his injustice in Europe To-night, as we are informed, some results of your Lordship's system of non-interference in the affairs of Spain are to be brought under the consideration of the House of Commons I am not in the confidence of the Hon Gentleman who will introduce that subject to the notice of the assembly of which, in spite of the electors of Hampshire, your Lordship has somehow or other contrived to become a member But I speak of circumstances with which I am well acquainted, and for the accuracy of which I stake my credit as a public writer, when I declare that of the 10,000 or 12,000 of your fellow-countrymen whom your crimping Lordship inveigled into a participation in the civil wars of Spain for no other

[1] Published 1819 to which Palmerston contributed

purpose than to extricate yourself from the consequences of your blundering policy, not 3,000 effective men are now in the field; such have been the fatal results of the climate and the cat-o'-nine-tails, of ignoble slaughter and of fruitless hardship. Your Lordship may affect a smile, and settle your cravat as if you were arranging your conscience; you may even prompt the most ill-informed man in his Majesty's dominions—I mean, of course, the First Lord of his Majesty's Treasury—to announce in the Upper House that the career of the British Legion has been a progress of triumph, and that its present situation is a state of comparative comfort; but I repeat my statement, and I declare most solemnly, before God and my country, that I am prepared to substantiate it. When the most impudent and the vilest of your Lordship's supporters next amuses the House with his clap-trap appeals to the tears of the widow and the sighs of the orphan, your Lordship may perhaps remember the responsibility you have yourself incurred, and, sick as the nation may be of this inglorious destruction, there is one silly head, I believe, that it would grieve no one to see added to the heap. It would

atone for the havoc, it would extenuate the slaughter, and the member for Westminster,[1] who is a patriot in two countries, would be hailed on his return as the means of having rid both England and Spain of an intolerable nuisance

For the last five years a mysterious dimness seems to have been stealing over the gems of our imperial diadem The standard of England droops fitfully upon its staff He must indeed be an inexperienced mariner who does not mark the ground swell of the coming tempest If there be a war in Europe to-morrow, it will be a war against English supremacy, and we have no allies None but your Lordship can suppose that the Cabinet of the Tuileries is not acting in concert with the Court of the Kremlin Austria, our natural friend on the Continent of Europe, shrinks from the contamination of our political propagandism If there be an European war, it will be one of those contests wherein a great State requires for its guidance all the resources of a master mind, it would be a crisis which would justify the presence of a Richelieu, a Pombal, or a Pitt O my coun-

[1] Evans

try! fortunate, thrice fortunate England! with your destinies at such a moment entrusted to the Lord Fanny of diplomacy! Methinks I can see your Lordship, the Sporus[1] of politics, cajoling France with an airy compliment, and menacing Russia with a perfumed cane!

February 22, 1836.

LETTER XII

To Sir John Hobhouse

Sir,—Your metamorphosis into a Whig and a Cabinet Minister[2] has always appeared to me even less marvellous than your transformation into a wit and a leader, after having passed the most impetuous years of life in what might have appeared to the inexperienced the less ambitious capacity of a dull dependent. In literature and in politics, until within a very short period, you have always shone with the

[1] What that thing of silk?
Sporus that mere white curd of asses' milk?
Satire or sense, alas, can Sporus feel?
Who breaks a butterfly upon the wheel?
Pope, *on Lord Francis Hervey.*

[2] In 1819 Hobhouse published a pamphlet, 'A Trifling Mistake, etc.,' by the author of the 'Defence of the People,' of Radical tendencies, for which he was committed to Newgate on the Speaker's warrant.

doubtful lustre of reflected light. You have gained notoriety by associating yourself with another's fame. The commentator of Byron, you naturally became in due season 'Sir Francis Burdett's man,'[1] as Mr Canning styled you, to your confusion, in the House of Commons, and to which sneer, after having taken a week to arrange your impromptu, you replied in an elaborate imitation of Chatham, admitted by your friends to be the greatest failure in parliamentary memory. At college your dignified respect for the peerage scarcely prepared us for your subsequent sneers at the order. Your readiness to bear the burden of the scrapes of those you honoured by your intimacy announced the amiability of your temper. Yet, whether you were sacrificing yourself on the altar of friendship, or concocting notes upon the pasquinades which others scribbled, there was always 'something too ponderous about your genius for a joke,' and when these words fell from your lips on Friday night, to me they seemed to flow with all the practised grace of a *tu quoque*, and to be not so much the inspiration of the

[1] Sir Francis Burdett by his eloquent and financial support secured the election of Hobhouse for the Westminster constituency in 1820

moment as the reminiscence of some of those quips and cranks of Mathews[1] and Scrope Davies[2] of which you were the constant, and often the unconscious, victim.

It may be the prejudice of party, perhaps the force of old associations, but to me your new character seems but thinly to veil your ancient reputation. There is a massy poise, even in your airiest flights, that reminds one rather of the vulture than the eagle; and your lightest movements are pervaded with a sort of elephantine grace which forces us to admire rather the painful tutorage of art than nature's happier impulse. Bustling at the university, blustering on the hustings, dangling the seals of office—a humble friend, a demagogue, or a placeman—your idiosyncrasy still prevails, and in your case, 'piddling Theobalds' has, at the best, but turned into 'slashing Bentley.'

Allow me to congratulate you on your plaintive confession, amid the roars of the House, that 'circumstances have brought you and your noble friend, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, together on the same bench.'[3] The honour of sharing the same seat with an in-

[1] Charles Mathews the elder.
[2] Lady Burdett's doctor.
[3] Hobhouse and Palmerston bore each other no love.

dividual might, in another's estimation, have sufficed, without the additional disgrace of calling attention to the stigma There is something so contaminating in a connection with that man, that when you voluntarily avowed it, we might be excused for admiring your valour rather than your discretion It is, in truth, a rare conjunction, and Circumstance, 'that unspiritual god,' as your illustrious companion, Lord Byron, has happily styled that common-place divinity, has seldom had to answer for a more degrading combination You have met, indeed, like the puritan and the prostitute on *the banks of Lethe* in Garrick's farce, with an equally convenient oblivion of the characteristic incidents of your previous careers, you giving up your annual parliaments and universal suffrage, he casting to the winds his close corporations and borough nominees, you whispering Conservatism on the hustings once braying with your revolutionary uproar, he spouting reform in the still recesses of the dust of Downing Street, the one reeking from a Newgate cell, the other redolent of the boudoirs of Mayfair, yet both of them, alike the Tory underling and the Radical demagogue, closing the ludicrous

contrast with one grand diapason of harmonious inconsistency—both merging in the Whig Minister.

That a politician may at different periods of his life, and under very different aspects of public affairs, conscientiously entertain varying opinions upon the same measure, is a principle which no member of the present House of Commons is entitled to question. I would not deny you, Sir, the benefit of the charity of society; but when every change of opinion in a man's career is invariably attended by a corresponding and advantageous change in his position, his motives are not merely open to suspicion—his conduct is liable to conviction. Yet there is one revolution in your sentiments on which I may be permitted particularly to congratulate you, and that country which you assist in misgoverning. Your sympathy on Friday night with the success of the British arms came with a consoling grace and a compensatory retribution from the man who has recorded in a solemn quarto his bitter regret that his countrymen were victorious at Waterloo.[1] I always

[1] 'The Substance of some Letters, written by an English Gentleman resident at Paris during the Last Reign of the Emperor Napoleon.' A volume extolling Napoleon and

admired the Whig felicity of your appointment as Secretary at War.

Pardon, Sir, the freedom with which I venture to address you. My candour may at least be as salutary as the cabbage-stalks of your late constituents. There are some indeed, who, as I am informed, have murmured at this method of communicating to them my opinion of their characters and careers. Yet I can conceive an individual so circumstanced that he would scarcely be entitled to indulge in such querulous sensitiveness. He should be one who had himself published letters without the ratification of his name, and then suppressed them; he should be one who had sat in trembling silence in the House when he was dared to repeat the statement which he had circulated by the press; he should be one to whom it had been asserted in his teeth, that he was 'a liar and a scoundrel, and only wanted courage to be an assassin.' It does not appear to me that such an individual could complain with any justice of the frankness of 'Runnymede.'

February 27, 1836.

attacking the restored Bourbon dynasty. The publication in (1816) caused much offence, and on its translation into French, the publisher was fined and imprisoned.

LETTER XIII

To Lord Glenelg[1]

My Lord,—Let me not disturb your slumbers too rudely: I will address you in a whisper, and on tiptoe. At length I have succeeded in penetrating the recesses of your enchanted abode. The knight who roused the Sleeping Beauty could not have witnessed stranger marvels in his progress than he who has at last contrived to obtain an interview with the sleeping Secretary.

The moment that I had passed the Foreign Office an air of profound repose seemed to pervade Downing Street, and as I approached the portal of your department, it was with difficulty I could resist the narcotic influence of the atmosphere. Your porter is no Argus. 'His calm, broad, thoughtless aspect breathed repose,' and when he 'slow from the bench arose, and swollen with sleep,' I almost imagined that, like his celebrated predecessor in the Castle of Indolence, he was about to furnish me with a nightcap, slippers, and a

[1] Colonial Secretary.

robe de chambre I found your clerks yawning, and your under-secretaries just waking from a dream A dosy, drowsy, drony hum, the faint rustling of some papers like the leaves of autumn, and a few noiseless apparitions gliding like ghosts, just assured me that the business of the nation was not neglected Every personage and every incident gradually prepared me for the quiescent presence of the master mind, until, adroitly stepping over your private secretary, nodding and recumbent at your threshold, I found myself before your Lordship, the guardian of our colonial empire, stretched on an easy couch in luxurious listlessness, with all the prim voluptuousness of a puritanical Sardanapalus

I forget who was the wild theorist who enunciated the absurd doctrine that 'ships, colonies, and commerce' were the surest foundation of the empire What an infinitely ridiculous ideal But the march of intellect and the spirit of the age have cleansed our brains of this perilous stuff Had it not been for the invention of ships, the great malady of sea sickness, so distressing to an indolent Minister, would be unknown, colonies, like country houses, we have long recognised to

be sources only of continual expense, and to be kept up merely from a puerile love of show; as for commerce, it is a vulgarism, and fit only for low people. What have such dainty nobles as yourself and Lord Palmerston to do with cottons and indigoes? Such coarse details you fitly leave to Mr. Poulett Thomson,[1] whose practical acquaintance with tallow is the only blot on the scutcheon of your refined and aristocratic Cabinet.

Although a grateful nation has seized every opportunity of expressing their confidence in your Lordship and your colleagues, and although myself, among more distinguished writers, have omitted no occasion of celebrating your inexhaustible panegyric, it appears to me, I confess, that scant justice has hitherto been done to the grand system of our present administration, and which they are putting in practice with felicitous rapidity and their habitual success. This grand system, it would seem, consists of a plan to govern the country without having anything to do.

The meritorious and unceasing labours of the noble Secretary for Foreign Affairs for the destruction of English influence on the Con-

[1] President of the Board of Trade.

tinent, will soon permit his Lordship to receive his salary without any necessary attendance at his office Lord Morpeth[1] has nearly got rid of Ireland The selection of your Lordship to regulate the destinies of our colonies insures the speediest and the most favourable results in effecting their emancipation from what one of your principal supporters styles, 'the unjust domination of the mother country,' and we are already promised a Lord Chancellor who is not to preside over the Chancery The recent government of Lord William Bentinck will, I fear, rob Sir John Hobhouse of half the glory of losing India, and the municipal corporations, if they work as well as you anticipate, may in due season permit Lord John Russell to resume his relinquished lyre Freed of our colonies, Ireland and India, the affairs of the Continent consigned to their own insignificance, Westminster Hall delivered over to the cheap lawyers, and our domestic polity regulated by vestries and town-councils, there is a fair probability that the First Lord of the Treasury, who envies you your congenial repose, may be relieved from any very onerous burden of

[1] Chief Secretary for Ireland

India sugar, and by the time we have lost that, the manufacture of beet-root will be perfect What if Colonel Torrens, perched on the Pisgah height of a joint-stock company, be transporting our fellow-countrymen to the milk and honey of Australia, without even the preparatory ceremony of a trial by jury—let the exiles settle this great constitutional question with the kangaroos[1] What if Canada be in rebellion—let not the menacing spectre of Papineau[2] or the suppliant shade of the liberal Gosford[3] scare your Lordship's dreams Slumber on without a pang, most vigilant of Secretaries I will stuff you a fresh pillow with your unanswered letters, and insure you a certain lullaby by reading to you one of your own despatches

March 12, 1836

[1] A policy of systematic compulsory emigration was advocated by Col Torrens

[2] Louis Joseph Papineau leader of the French Canadian party and provoker of the rebellion of 1837

[3] Governor General of Canada

LETTER XIV

To the Right Hon. Edward Ellice[1]

Sir,—In this age of faction, it is delightful to turn to one public character whom writers of all parties must unite in addressing in terms of unqualified panegyric. From a 'man discreditably known in the city,' you have become a statesman creditably known at Court. Such is the triumph of perseverance in a good cause, undaunted by calumny and undeterred by the narrow-minded scruples of petty intellects. That influence which, in spite of prejudice, you have gained by the uniform straightforwardness of your conduct, you have confirmed by that agreeable and captivating demeanour which secures you the hearts of men as well as their confidence. Uninfluenced by personal motives, always ready to sacrifice self, and recoiling from intrigue with the antipathy of a noble mind, you stand out in bold and favourable relief to the leaders of that party whose destinies, from a purely patriotic

[1] A city magnate, brother-in-law of Lord Grey, and for man[y] years member for Coventry. He was the ambassador of th[e] Whigs to O'Connell in the Lichfield House compact.

motive, you occasionally condescend to regulate.

I ought, perhaps, before this to have congratulated you on your return to that country whose interests are never absent from your thoughts; but I was unwilling to disturb, even with my compliments, a gentleman who, I am aware, has been labouring of late so zealously for the commonweal as the Right Hon. Mr. Ellice. Your devotion in your recent volunteer visit to Constantinople has not been lost on the minds of your countrymen. They readily recognise your preeminent fitness to wrestle with the Russian bear; and they who have witnessed in a northern forest a duel between those polished animals, must feel convinced that you are the only English statesman duly qualified to mingle in a combat which is at the same time so dexterous and so desperate. Happy England, whose fortunes are supervised by such an unsalaried steward as the member for Coventry! Thrice fortunate Telemachus of Lambton Castle, guided by such a Mentor!

After the turmoil of party politics, you must have found travel delightful! I can fancy you gazing upon the blue Symplegades, or roaming

amid the tumuli of Troy. The first glance at the Ægean must have filled you with classic rapture. Your cultured and accomplished mind must have revelled in the recollections of the heroic past. How different from the associations of those jobbing politicians, who, when they sail upon Salamis, are only reminded of Greek bonds, and whose thoughts, when they mingle amid the imaginary tumult of the Pnyx at Athens, only recur to the broils of a settling day at the Stock Exchange of London!

In your political career you have emulated the fame, and rivalled, if not surpassed, the exploits of the great Earl of Warwick. He was only a King-maker, but Mr. Ellice is a maker of Ministers. How deeply was Lord Grey indebted to your disinterested services![1] Amid the musings of the Liternum of Howick, while moralising on the gratitude of a party, how fondly must he congratulate himself on his fortune in such a relative. It is said that his successor is not so prompt to indicate his sense of your services as would be but just. But the ingratitude of men, and especially of Ministers, is p overbial. Lord Melbourne, however, may yet live to be sensible of your

[1] Ellice was a sharer in the overthrow of Lord Grey in 1834.

minable exercise of the prerogative of the rown In the meantime the unbounded onfidence of Lord Palmerston in your good intentions may in some degree console you for the suspicions of the Prime Minister, to say nothing of the illimitable trust of the noble Secretary for the Colonies, who sleeps on in unbroken security as long as you are the guardian angel of his slumbers

Distinguished as you are by the inflexible integrity of your conduct, both in public and private life, by your bland manners and your polite carriage, your total absence of all low ambition and your contempt for all intrigue and subterranean practices, you are, if possible, still more eminent for your philosophical ex emption from antiquated prejudice Th people of England can never forget that it w your emancipated mind that first soared sup rior to the mischievous institution of a Natio Church, and that, with the characteri liberality of your nature, yours was the intel that first devised the ingenious plan of app ing Ireland by the sacrifice of England you been influenced in your conduct b factious object of establishing your frien e enjoyment of a power to exercise

ey had previously proved themselves in-
pable, it might in some degree have dete-
iorated from the singleness of your purpose;
but no one can suppose, for an instant, that in
forming a close alliance one year with a man
whom twelve months before they had de-
nounced as a rebel, or in decreeing the
destruction of an institution which they had
just recently pledged themselves to uphold,
your pupils of the present administration were
actuated by any other motives but the most
just, the most disinterested, and the most
honourable.

You have recently been gratified by witness-
ing the proud and predominant influence of
your country in the distant and distracted
regions of the East. The compliments which
were lavished on yourself and your companion
by the Czar must have been as flattering to
the envoy as they were to the confiding
sovereign with whose dignity you were en
trusted. It must be some time before th
salutes of Odessa cease ringing in your ea
and it cannot be supposed that your excit
imagination can speedily disembarrass its
of your splendid progress in a steamer o
the triumphant waters of the Euxine.

when you have in some degree recovered from the intoxication of success and the inebriating influence of Royal and Imperial condescension, let us hope that you may deign to extend your practised attention to our domestic situation The country is very prosperous, the Stock Exchange has not been so active since 1825 They certainly have missed you a little in Spanish, but the railways, I understand, have been looking up since your return, especially the shares of those companies which have no hope or intention of prosecuting their designs In the meantime, perhaps, for you may be destined the glory of inducing Lord Melbourne to tolerate the presence of Mr O'Connell at an official banquet That would be an achievement worthy of your great mind. The new Liberal Club, too, which, like Eldorado, is to supply

> Shirts for the shirtless, suppers for the starved,

may merit your organising patronage. For the rest, the unbounded confidence which subsists between our gracious Sovereign and his Ministers, the complete harmony at length established between the two Houses of Parliament, the perfect tranquillity of Ire-

vouched by the *de facto* member for Dublin, and guaranteed by Lord Plunket, and the agreeable circumstance that the people of England are arrayed in two hostile and determined parties, all combine to assure us of a long, a tranquil, and a prosperous administration of our affairs by the last Cabinet which was constructed under your auspices.

March 20, 1836.

LETTER XV

To Viscount Melbourne

My Lord,—I always experience peculiar gratification in addressing your Lordship—your Lordship is such a general favourite. I have read somewhere of 'the best-natured man with the worst-natured muse.'[1] I have always deemed your Lordship the best-natured Minister with the worst-natured party. And really, if you have sometimes so lost your temper—if for those Epicurean shrugs of the shoulder, and *nil admirari* smiles, which were once your winning characteristics, you have

[1] 'The best good man with the worst-natured muse' (Sackville, Lord Buckhurst).—*Rochester.*

occasionally of late substituted a little of the Cambyses' vein, and demeaned yourself as if you were practising 'Pistol' for the next private theatricals at Panshanger—very extenuating circumstances may, I think, be found in the heterogeneous and Hudibrastic elements of that party which Fate, in a freak of fun, has called upon your Lordship to regulate. What a crew! I can compare them to nothing but the Schwalbach swine in the Brunnen Bubbles, guzzling and grunting in a bed of mire, fouling themselves, and bedaubing every luckless passenger with their contaminating filth.

We are all now going into the country, and you and your colleagues are about to escape for a season from what your Lordship delicately terms the 'badgering' of Parliament. I trust you will find the relaxation renovating. How you will recreate yourselves we shall be anxious to learn. I think the Cabinet might take to cricket; they are a choice eleven. With their peculiarly pacific temperaments and high national feelings they might venture, I think, to play against 'all England.' Lord Palmerston and Lord Glenelg [illegible] keeping in would [illegible]

score. Lord John, indeed, with all his flourishing, will probably end in knocking down his own wicket; and as for Sir Cam, the chances certainly are that he will be 'caught out,' experiencing the same fate in play as in politics. If you could only engage Lord Durham to fling sticks at the seals of the Foreign Office, and the agile Mr. Ellice to climb a greasy pole for the Colonial portfolio, I think you will have provided a very entertaining programme of Easter sports.

My Lord, they say, you know, when things are at the worst, they generally mend. On this principle our affairs may really be considered highly promising. The state of Spain demonstrates the sagacity of our Foreign Secretary. The country is divided into two great parties; we have contrived to interfere without supporting either, but have lavished our treasure and our blood in upholding a Camarilla. This is so bad, that really the happiest results may speedily be anticipated. Canada is in a state of rebellion, and therefore after Easter we may perhaps find loyalty and peace predominant, especially when we recall to our recollection the profound intellect[1]

[1] Lord Glenelg.

your Lordship has selected for the settlement of that distracted colony. The Whigs, my Lord, seem indeed to have a happy knack in the choice of Governors, and almost to rival in their appointments the Duke in *Don Quixote* To them we are indebted alike for the prescient firmness of a Gosford[1] and the substantial judgment of a Sligo[2] The spring-like promise of the experienced Elphinstone will explain the genial seed so deftly sown by the noble member for Glasgow,[3] and complete the trio Three wise and learned rulers! To whomsoever of my leash my Lord Glenelg may award the golden palm, I doubt not it will prove an apple of sufficient discord.

> But all our praises why should Lords engross?

particularly when the appointments of Lord Auckland[4] and Lord Nugent[5] are duly mentioned.

> Rise, honest muse, and sing Sir Francis Head![6]

The convenient candour of that celebrated

[1] Lord Gosford, Governor of Canada
[2] Lately displaced from the Government of Jamaica
[3] Lord William Bentinck
[4] Governor General of India
[5] High Commissioner of the Ionian Islands under Lord Grey, but recalled by Sir Robert Peel
[6] Sir F B Head, Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada

functionary will at least afford one solacing reminiscence for your Easter holidays.

But what is Spanish anarchy or Canadian rebellion, the broils of Jamaica or the impending catastrophe of Hindostan, when Ireland is tranquil? And who can doubt the tranquillity of Ireland? Has not your Lordship the bond of the trustworthy Mr. O'Connell, whose private praises you celebrate with such curious felicity, and the choice collateral security of the veracious Lord Plunket. With such a muniment in the strong box of your Cabinet securities, what care you for the charges of Baron Smith and the calendar of Tipperary? And yet, my Lord, though Ireland is tranquil, and though the Papists, in their attempts on the lives of their rivals, seem of late charitably to have substituted perjury for massacre, I fancy I mark a cloud upon your triumphant brow at my incidental mention of that fortunate land. Be of good cheer, my Lord; and if you cannot be bold, at least be reckless. In spite of the elaborate misrepresentations of party, *the state of Irish affairs is very simple*. The point lies in a nutshell, and may be expressed in a single sentence. Your Lordship's accommodation bills with Mr. O'Connell

are becoming due, and unless you can contrive to get them renewed, the chances are your Lordship s firm will become bankrupt

It seems, my Lord, that the hon member for Finsbury[1] is about to move a petition to our gracious Sovereign to intercede with the King of the French in favour of the State victims of the three glorious days, persecuted like other great men for anticipating their age, and attempting to do that in 1830 the con summation of which was reserved for 1835 My Lord, buffoonery after a while wearies, put an end, I beseech you, to the farce of your Government, and, to save time, consent at once that you and your colleagues should be substituted in their stead Nay, I wish not to be harsh, my nature is not vindictive I would condemn you to no severer solitude than the gardens of Hampton Court, where you might saunter away the remaining years of your now ludicrous existence, sipping the last novel of *Paul de Kock*, while lounging over a sun-dial

March 30, 1836

[1] Thomas Duncombe

LETTER XVI

To the House of Lords[1]

My Lords,—If there be one legislative quality more valuable than another, it is the power of discriminating between the Cause and the Pretext. For two sessions of Parliament an attempt has been made to force upon your Lordships' adoption a peculiar scheme of policy under the pretext of doing 'justice to Ireland.' A majority of the members of the House of Commons, no matter how obtained, have not felt competent, or inclined, to penetrate beneath the surface of this plausible plea. They have accepted the pretext as a sound and genuine principle of conduct, and have called for your Lordships' co-operation in measures which you have declined to sanction, because you believe you have distinguished the concealed from the ostensible motive of their proposition. Your Lordships believe, that under the pretext of doing 'justice to Ireland,' you are called upon to do

[1] Occasioned by the Municipal Corporations (Ireland) Bill, which would break the Protestant power in Ireland.

ing to nestle in the bowers of Downing Street this topsy-turvy logic may flash conviction on the mind of some penniless expectant of the broken victuals of the official banquet; but the people of England recoil with disgust from the dangerous balderdash, and look up to your Lordships as their hereditary leaders, to stand between the ark of the constitution and the unhallowed hands that are thrust forward to soil its splendour and violate its sanctity. The people of England are not so far divorced from their ancient valour, that after having withstood Napoleon and the whole world in arms, they are to sink before a horde of their manumitted serfs and the *nisi prius* demagogue whom a foreign priesthood have hired to talk treason on their blasphemous behalf.[1] After having routed the lion, we will not be preyed upon by the wolf. If we are to fall, if this great empire, raised by the heroic energies of the English nation—that nation of which your fathers formed a part—is indeed to be dissolved, let us hope that the last moments of our career may prove at least an euthanasia: let no pestilent blight, after our meridian glory, sully the splendour of our setting; and whether

[1] O'Connell.

we fall before the foreign foe we have so often baffled, or whether by some mysterious combination of irresistible circumstances, our empire sinks like the Queen of the Adriatic beneath the waves that we still rule, let not the records of our future annalist preserve a fact which, after all our greatness, might well break the spirit of the coming generations of our species. Let it not be said that we truckled to one, the unparalleled and unconstitutional scope of whose power is only equalled by the sordid meanness of his rapacious soul. Let it not be said that the English constitution sank before a rebel without dignity and a demagogue without courage. This grand pensionary of bigotry and sedition presumes to stir up the people of England against your high estate. Will the Peers of England quail to this brawling mercenary—this man who has even degraded crime, who has deprived treason of its grandeur and sedition of its sentiment; who is paid for his patriotism, and whose philanthropy is hired by the job—audacious, yet a poltroon—agitating a people, yet picking their pockets; in mind a Catiline, in action a Cleon?

This disturber is in himself nothing. He

has neither learning, wit, eloquence, nor refined taste, nor elevated feeling, nor a passionate and creative soul. What ragged ribaldry are his public addresses, whether they emanate from his brazen mouth or from his leaden pen! His pathos might shame the maudlin Romeo of a barn; his invective is the reckless abandonment of the fish-market. Were he a man of genius, he would be unsuited to the career for which he is engaged; for, after all, he is but a slave. But it is the awful character of his master that invests this creature with his terrible consideration. However we may detest or despise the *nisi prius* lawyer hired to insult and injure the realm of England, we know that he is the delegate of the most ancient and powerful priesthood in Europe. It is as the great papal nominee that this O'Connell, with all his vileness, becomes a power to control which requires no common interference.

My Lords, the English nation believes that that interference can be efficiently exercised by your august assembly. In you are reposed their hopes; you will not disappoint them. In a few hours, in obedience to the mandate of the papal priesthood, that shallow voluptuary who is still Prime Minister of England, will

call upon your Lordships with cuckoo note, to do 'justice to Ireland' Do it Justice to Ireland will best be secured by doing justice to England The people of England created *the empire* At the time when we were engaged in that great strife which will rank in the estimation of posterity with the Punic wars and the struggles of the Greeks against Asia, the very men who are now menacing your illustrious order and stirring up war against our national institutions, were in communication with our most inveterate foe, and soliciting invasion My Lords, you will not forget this, you will not forget to distinguish their pretext from their cause These men cannot be conciliated They are your foes because they are the foes of England They hate our free and fertile isle They hate our order, our civilisation, our enterprising industry, our sustained courage, our decorous liberty, our pure religion This wild, reckless, indolent, uncertain, and superstitious race have no sympathy with the English character Their fair ideal of human felicity is an alternation of clannish broils and coarse idolatry Their history describes an unbroken circle of bigotry and blood And now, forsooth, the

cry is raised that they have been misgoverned! How many who sound this party shibboleth have studied the history of Ireland? A savage population, under the influence of the Papacy, has, nevertheless, been so regulated, that they have contributed to the creation of a highly-civilised and Protestant empire. Why, is not that the paragon of political science? Could Machiavel teach more? My Lords, shall the delegates of these tribes, under the direction of the Roman priesthood, ride rough-shod over our country—over England—haughty, and still imperial England? Forbid it all the memory of your ancestors! Rest assured that *if* you perform your high and august office as becomes you, rest assured that in this agony of the Protestant cause and the British empire, the English nation will not desert you. All parties and all sects of Englishmen, in this fierce and yet degrading struggle, must ultimately rally round your House. My Lords, be bold, be resolute, be still 'the pillars of the State.'

April 18, 1836.

LETTER XVII

To the House of Lords[1]

My Lords,—You have unfurled the national standard. Its patriotic and hearty motto is 'Justice for England.' The English nation will support you in your high endeavours. Fear not that they will be backward. They recognise your Lordships as their natural leaders, who have advanced, according to your hereditary duty, to assist them in the extremity of their degraded fortunes. The time is come for bold and vigorous conduct; the time is come to rid ourselves of that base tyranny, offensive to the pride of every Englishman, no matter what his religious sect or class of political opinions. The English nation will not be ruled by the Irish priesthood. Five years of Whig government have not yet so completely broken our once proud spirit, that we can submit without a murmur or a struggle to such a yoke. If Athens, even in her lower fortunes, could free herself of her thirty

[1] The House of Lords mauled the Municipal Corporations (Ireland) Bill to such an extent, that after a brief controversy between the two Houses, the Bill was dropped

tyrants, let us hope that England, in spite of all the jobs of our corrupt and corrupting Government, may yet chase away those gentlemen who, fresh from the unction of M'Hale[1] and the mild injunctions of the apostolic Kehoe, have undertaken to guard over the rights and liberties, the property and the religion, of Protestant England. We have not reformed the third estate of the realm in order that England should be governed by the nominees of the Papacy. There is not a man in Britain, Tory or Radical, Episcopalian or Presbyterian, who can stand this long; there is not a man in Britain who at the bottom of his heart is not proud of our empire, and who does not despise the inferior race who dare to menace its integrity. However faction may corrupt and machinate, the people of England will never long submit to a Milesian master; and when they reflect upon their present degradation, and are conscious that they have experienced it only to secure in power the dull and desperate remains of a once haughty oligarchy, long baffled in their anti-national attempts upon the free realm of England, the nation will rise in its wrath, and execute vengeance upon the

[1] Archbishop of Tuam.

cabal which has thus trifled with this great country's immemorial honour.

The English *nation* requires *justice*; and it is not content to receive that justice by instalments—a process that may suit their lately manumitted serfs, but which will not accord with their stern and determined spirits, habituated to the ennobling exercise and the proud enjoyment of an ancient liberty. They require justice, and they will have that justice full and free. It must be meted out speedily and *not* scantily. They *require* this justice, with the Peers of England at their head, and the result will prove whether the Milesian peasantry, led on by the papist priesthood, can cope with this proud and powerful society. It is not just to England that the Sovereign should be deprived of his undoubted prerogative; it is not just to England that M'Hale and Kehoe should dictate to our King the servants whom our Royal master should employ; it is not just to England that the King of England should by any such an anti-national process be surrounded by the Ministers, not of his choice, but of his necessity; it is not just to England that a knot of papist legislators should deal with the polity and property of

our Protestant Church; it is not just to England that no English blood in Ireland should be secure from plunder or assassination; it is not just to England that a hired disturber, paid by the Roman priesthood, should ramble over our country to stir up rebellion against your Lordships' august estate; that his ribald tongue should soil and outrage all that we have been taught to love, honour, and obey—our women, our princes, and our laws; and lastly, it is not just to England that its constitution should be attacked, its empire menaced, and its religion scoffed at.

My Lords, the same party that demands justice for Ireland is not less clamorous in its requisition of justice for Canada. Will you grant it?[1] Justice for Botany Bay, too, is, I have heard, in the market, and the cry is said to be worth some good 2,000*l.* per annum. The noble member for Glasgow, the vigorous writer of that lucid address which I had the honour of transferring from its original Sanscrit and first introducing to the notice of the British public,[2] has, I believe, already done justice to India. My Lords! when and where

[1] The Papineau rebellion broke out in 1837.
[2] Lord William Bentinck, p. 86.

is this dangerous nonsense to terminate? How compatible is the prevalence of such windy words with the subsistence of an empire? It may be as well for your Lordships to ponder on the consequences. The English nation formed the empire, ours is the imperial isle, England is the Metropolitan country; and we might as well tear out the living heart from the human form, and bid the heaving corpse still survive, as suppose that a great empire can endure without some concentration of power and vitality.

My Lords, the season is ripe for action. In spite of all the machinations of the anti-English faction, never was your great assembly more elevated in the esteem and affection of your countrymen than at this perilous hour. The English are a reflecting and observant people; they ponder even amid tumult; they can draw a shrewd moral even from the play of their own passions; and they cannot but feel, that after all the revolutionary rhetoric which has been dinned into their ears of late in panegyric of a Reform Ministry and a Reformed Parliament, and in simultaneous depreciation of your Lordships' power and usefulness, that not only in eloquence and

knowledge, in elevation of thought and feeling, and even in practical conduct, your Lordships need fear no comparison with that assembly which, from a confusion of ideas, is in general supposed to be more popular in its elements and character, but that on all occasions when the dignity of the empire and the rights of the subject have been threatened and assailed, the national cause has invariably found in your Lordships' House that support and sympathy which have been denied to it by the other Chamber.

Your Lordships, therefore, commence the conflict with the anti-English party under great *advantages. Not only is your cause a just* one, and your resolution to maintain its justice unshakable, but there happens in your instance that which unfortunately cannot always be depended on in those great conjunctures which decide the fate of crowns and nations. The sympathy of the nation is arrayed under your banner. And inasmuch as the popularity which you now enjoy is to be distinguished from that volatile effusion which is the hurry-skurry offspring of ignorance and pride, but is founded on the surer basis of returning reason and mellowed passions and sharp experiences, you may rest assured that the

support of your countrymen will not be withdrawn from you in the hour of trial

But, my Lords, do not undervalue the enemy which, at the head of the English nation, you are about to combat If you imagine that you are going to engage only an ignorant and savage population, led on by a loose tongued poltroon, you will indeed deceive yourselves, and the truth will not be in you My Lords, you are about to struggle with a foe worthy even of the Peers of England, for he is a foe that has placed his foot upon the neck of Emperors My Lords, you are about to struggle with the Papacy, and in its favourite and devoted land Whether the conspiracy of the Irish priests be more successful than the fleets of Spain, and more fatal to the freedom and the faith of England, time can alone prove, and Providence can alone decide But let us not forget that Heaven aids those who aid themselves, and, firm in the faith that nerved the arms of our triumphant fathers, let us meet without fear that dark and awful power, that strikes at once at the purity of our domestic hearths and the splendour of our imperial sway

April 23, 1836

LETTER XVIII

To the Lord Chancellor

My Lord,—The gay liver, who, terrified by the consequences of his excesses, takes to water and a temperance society, is in about the same condition as the Whig Ministers in their appointment of a Lord Chancellor, when, still smarting under the eccentric vagaries of a Brougham, they sought refuge in the calm reaction of your sober Lordship. This change from Master Shallow to Master Silence was for a moment amusing; but your Lordship has at length found the faculty of speech, and your astonished countrymen begin to suspect that they may not be altogether the gainers in the great transition from humbug to humdrum. We have escaped from the eagle to be preyed upon by the owl. For your Lordship is also a Reformer, a true Reformer; you are to proceed in the grand course of social amelioration and party jobbing, and the only substantial difference, it seems, that a harassed nation is to recognise, is that which consists

for 'justice to Ireland,' might reasonably have been expected from your eminent situation. Your party may share with you the odium or the glory of your political projects, but the laurels which you have recently acquired by your luminous eloquence and your profound legal knowledge are all your Lordship's own, and I doubt whether any of your friends or your opponents will be aspiring enough to envy you their rich fruition.

And here, as it is the fashion to do 'justice to Whiggism,' I cannot but pause to notice the contrast, so flattering to the judgment and high principle of your Lordship's party, which their legal appointments afford when compared with those of the annihilated Tories, and especially of the late Government. The administration of justice is still a matter of some importance, and we naturally shrink from the party who have entrusted its conduct to men so notoriously incompetent as a Sugden[1] or a Scarlett,[2] or placed upon the judgment seat such mere political adventurers as an Alderson and a Parke, a Patterson and a Coleridge, a Taunton and a Tindal! How re-

[1] Lord St. Leonards.

[2] Lord Abinger.

order which had long contributed to that pure and learned administration of justice which was once the boast of Britons. But if the Whigs, as their organs daily assure us, are indeed to be our perpetual masters, we may be excused for viewing with indifference, if not with complacency, that promised arrangement by which the most important duties of the State are no longer assigned at the caprice of a party, which, with a singularly sound judgment, has periodically selected for their performance an Erskine, a Brougham, and finally, your learned Lordship. The still haughty Venetians sometimes console themselves with the belief that their State would not have fallen if the last of their Doges had not unfortunately been a plebeian; the Bar of England, that illustrious body which has contributed to our fame and our felicity not less than the most celebrated of our political institutions, may perhaps, in a sympathetic strain of feeling, some day be of opinion that they would not have been expelled from their high and just position in our society, if the last of the Lord Chancellors had been worthy of being their chief; and posterity may perhaps class together, in the same scale of unsuitable

with foreign Courts and Cabinets that high and severe spirit of public rectitude which obtained our own rights by acknowledging those of others.

Will the hybrid thing which, under Lord Cottenham's scheme of legal reform, is to be baptized in mockery a Lord Chancellor, afford these great advantages in the Cabinet or the Senate? He is to be a lawyer without a court, and a lawyer without a court will soon be a lawyer without law. The Lord High Chancellor of England will speedily subside into a political nonentity like the President of the Council; that office which is the fitting appanage of pompous imbecility. Lord Cottenham may be excused for believing that to make a Lord Chancellor it is enough to plant a man upon a woolsack, and thrust a wig upon his head and a gold-embroidered robe upon his back; but the people of England have been accustomed to recognise in a Lord Chancellor, a man who has won his way to a great position by the exercise of great qualities —a man of singular acuteness, and profound learning, and vast experience, and patient study, and unwearied industry—a man who has obtained the confidence of his profession

before he challenges the confidence of his country, and who has secured eminence in the House of Commons before he has aspired to superiority in the House of Lords—a man who has expanded from a great lawyer into a great statesman, and who brings to the woolsack the commanding reputation which has been gained in the long and laborious years of an admired career.

My Lord, this is not your portrait You are the child of reform, the chance offspring of *political agitation and factious intrigue* The Whigs have stirred up and made muddy even the fountain of justice, for a moment an airy bubble, glittering in the sunshine, floated on the excited surface, but that brilliant bubble soon burst and vanished, and a scum, thick and obscure, now crests the once pure and tranquil waters

April 30, 1836.

LETTER XIX

To Viscount Melbourne

My Lord,—I had the honour of addressing you on the eve of your last holidays; the

delightful hour of relaxation again approaches: I wish you again to retire to the bowers of Brocket with my congratulations. The campaign about to close has been brief, but certainly not uneventful; I will not say disastrous, because I wish to soothe, rather than irritate, your tortured feelings. The incidents have been crowded, as in the last act of one of those dramas to which it was formerly your ambition to supply an epilogue. Why did that ambition ever become so unnaturally elevated? Why was your Lordship not content to remain agreeable? Why did you aspire to be great? A more philosophical moderation would have saved you much annoyance and your country much evil; yourself some disgraceful situations, perhaps some ludicrous ones. When I last addressed you, your position was only mischievous; it is now ridiculous. Your dark master, the Milesian Eblis, has at length been vanquished by that justice for which he is so clamorous, and which he has so long outraged. The poisoned chalice of revolutionary venom which your creatures prepared for our august Senate, august although you are a member of it, has been returned to their own lips. The House

delightful hour of relaxation again approaches: *I wish you again to retire to the* bowers of Brocket with my congratulations. The campaign about to close has been brief, but certainly not uneventful; I will not say disastrous, because I wish *to soothe, rather than* irritate, your tortured feelings. The incidents have been crowded, as in the last act of one of those dramas to which it was formerly your ambition to supply an epilogue. Why did that ambition ever become so unnaturally elevated? Why was your Lordship not content to remain agreeable? Why did *you aspire* to be great? A more philosophical moderation would have saved you much annoyance and your country much evil; yourself some disgraceful situations, perhaps some ludicrous ones. When I last addressed you, your position was only mischievous; it is now ridiculous. Your dark master, *the Milesian* Eblis, has at length been vanquished by that justice for which he is so clamorous, and which *he has so long* outraged. The poisoned chalice of revolutionary venom which your creatures prepared *for* our august Senate, august although you are a member of it, has been returned *to their own lips.* The House

of Lords, decried for its ignorance and inefficiency by adventurers without talents and without education, has vindicated its claims to the respect of the country for its ability and its knowledge. Held up to public scorn by your hirelings as the irresponsible tyrants of the land, a grateful nation recognises in the Peers of England the hereditary trustees of their rights and liberties, the guardians of their greatness, and the eloquent and undaunted champions of the integrity of their empire. The greater portion of the nation has penetrated the superficial charlatanism of Whig Machiavellism. Your hollow pretences all evaporated, your disgraceful manœuvres all detected, your reckless expedients all exhausted, we recognise only a desperate and long-baffled oligarchy, ready to sacrifice for the possession of a power to which they are incompetent, the laws, the empire, and the religion of England.

My Lord, it requires no prophet to announce that the commencement of the end is at length at hand. The reign of delusion is about to close. The man who obtains property by false pretences is sent to Botany Bay. Is the party that obtains power by the same means to

great mass of the lesser proprietors
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offers them a constitutional means of
and a legitimate method of redre
Ecclesiastical Establishment, preserved
munificent endowment from the fatal ne
of pandering to the erratic fancies of it
municants, has maintained the sacred
of learning and religion, and preserved
doxy while it has secured toleration; ho
of primogeniture has supplied the co
with a band of natural and indepe
leaders, trustees of those legal institu
which pervade the land, and which are
origin of our political constitution.
great body corporate, styled a nation—a
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orderly We are preserved from those reckless and tempestuous sallies that in other countries, like a whirlwind, topple down in an instant an ancient crown, or sweep away an illustrious aristocracy This constitution, which has secured order, has consequently promoted civilisation, and the almost unbroken tide of progressive amelioration has made us the freest, the wealthiest, and the most refined society of modern ages Our commerce is unrivalled, our manufacturers supply the world, our agriculture is the most skilful in Christendom So national are our institutions, so completely have they arisen from the temper and adapted themselves to the character of the people, that when for a season they were *apparently annihilated*, the people of England returned to them, and established them with renewed strength and renovated vigour

The constitution of England is again threatened, and at a moment when the nation is more prosperous, more free, and more famous than at any period of its momentous and memorable career Why is this? What has occasioned these distempered times, which makes the loyal tremble and the traitor smile? Why has this dark cloud suddenly gathered in

a sky so serene and so splendid? Is there any analogy between this age and that of the first Charles? Are the same causes at work, or is the apparent similarity produced only by designing men, who make use of the perverted past as a passport to present mischief? These are great questions, which it may be profitable to discuss and wise to study.

Rapin, a foreigner who wrote our history, in the course of his frigid yet accurate pages, indulged in one philosophical observation. Struck at the same time by our greatness and by the fury of our factions, the Huguenot exclaimed, 'It appears to me that this great society can only be dissolved by the violence of its political parties.' What are these parties? Why are they violent? Why should they exist? In resolving these questions, we may obtain an accurate idea of our present political position, and by pondering over the past we may make that past not a prophecy as the disaffected intend, but a salutary lesson by which the loyal may profit.

The two great parties into which England has during the last century and a half been divided, originated in the ancient struggle between the Crown and the aristocracy. As

long as the Crown possessed or aspired to despotic power, the feeling of the nation supported the aristocracy in their struggles to establish a free government The aristocracy of England formed the constitution of the Plantagenets, the wars of the Roses destroyed that aristocracy, and the despotism of the Tudors succeeded Renovated by more than a century of peace and the spoils of the Papacy, the aristocracy of England attacked the first Stuarts, who succeeded to a despotism which they did not create When Charles the First, after a series of great concessions which ultimately obtained for him the support of the most illustrious of his early opponents, raised the royal standard, the constitution of the Plantagenets, and more, had been restored and secured But a portion of the able party which had succeeded in effecting such a vast and beneficial revolution was not content to part with the extraordinary powers which they had obtained in this memorable struggle This section of the aristocracy were the origin of the English Whigs, though that title was not invented until the next reign The primitive Whigs—'Parliament men,' as they liked to call themselves, 'Roundheads,' as they were

in time dubbed—aspired to an oligarchy. For a moment they obtained one; but unable to maintain themselves in power against the returning sense and rising spirit of a generous and indignant people, they called to their aid that domestic revolutionary party which exists in all countries, and an anti-national enemy in addition. These were the English Radicals, or Root-and-Branch men, and the Scotch Covenanters. To conciliate the first they sacrificed the Crown; to secure the second they abolished the Church. The constitution of England in Church and State was destroyed, and the Whig oligarchy, were soon merged in the common ruin.

The ignoble tyranny to which this great nation was consequently subject produced that reaction which is in the nature of human affairs. The ancient constitution was in time restored, and the Church and the Crown were invested with greater powers than they had enjoyed previously to their overthrow. So hateful had been the consequences of Whig rule, that the people were inclined rather to trust the talons of arbitrary power than to take refuge under the wing of these pretended advocates of popular rights. A worthless

monarch and a corrupted court availed themselves of the offered opportunity; and when James the Second ascended the throne, the nation was again prepared to second the aristocracy in a struggle for their liberties. But the Whigs had profited by their previous experiment: they resolved upon a revolution, but they determined that that revolution should be brought about by as slight an appeal to popular sympathies as possible. They studiously confined that appeal to the religious feelings of the nation. They hired a foreign prince and enlisted a foreign army in their service. They dethroned James, they established themselves in power without the aid of the mass; and had William the Third been a man of ordinary capacity, the constitution of Venice would have been established in England in 1688. William the Third told the Whigs that he would never consent to be a Doge. Resembling Louis Philippe in his character as well as in his position, that extraordinary prince baffled the Whigs by his skilful balance of parties; and had Providence accorded him an heir, it is probable that the oligarchical faction would never have revived in England. The Whigs have ever been

opposed to the national institutions because they are adverse to the establishment of an oligarchy. Local institutions, supported by a landed gentry, check them; hence their love of centralisation and their hatred of unpaid magistrates. An independent hierarchy checks them; hence their affected advocacy of toleration and their patronage of the Dissenters. The power of the Crown checks them; therefore they always labour to reduce the sovereign to a nonentity, and by the establishment of the Cabinet they have virtually banished the King from his own councils. But, above all, the Parliament of England checks them, and therefore it may be observed that the Whigs at all times are quarrelling with some portion of those august estates. They despair of destroying the Parliament; by it, and by it alone, can they succeed in their objects. *Corruption for one part, force for the other*, then, is their motto. In 1640 they attempted to govern the country by the House of Commons, because the aristocracy was then more powerful in the House of Commons than in the House of Lords, where a Peerage, exhausted by civil wars, had been too liberally recruited from the courtiers of the Tudors and

the Stuarts At the next revolution which the Whigs occasioned, they attempted to govern the country by the House of Lords, in which they were predominant and, in order to guarantee their power for ever, they introduced a Bill to deprive the King of his prerogative of making further Peers The revolution of 1640 led to the abolition of the House of Lords because the Lords opposed the oligarchy Having a majority in the House of Lords, the Whigs introduced the Peerage Bill, by which the House of Lords would have been rendered independent of the sovereign, unpopular with the country, the Whigs attacked the influence of popular elec tion, and the moment that, by the aid of the most infamous corruption, they had obtained a temporary majority in the Lower House, they passed the Septennial Act The Whigs of the eighteenth century swamped the House of Commons, the Whigs of the nineteenth would 'swamp the House of Lords The Whigs of the eighteenth century would have rendered the House of Lords unchangeable, the Whigs of the nineteenth remodel the House of Commons

I conclude here the first chapter of the

period, more broken, sunk, and shattered, more desolate and disheartened, than these same Whigs at the Peace of Paris. From that period till 1830, the tactics of the Whigs consisted in gently and gradually extracting themselves from their false position as the disciples of Jacobinism, and assuming their ancient post as the hereditary guardians of an hereditary monarchy. To make the transition less difficult than it threatened, they invented Liberalism, a bridge by which they were to regain the lost mainland, and daintily recross on tiptoe the chasm over which they had originally sprung with so much precipitation. A dozen years of 'liberal principles' broke up the *national* party of England, cemented by half a century of prosperity and glory, compared with which all the annals of the realm are dim and lacklustre. Yet so weak intrinsically was the oligarchical faction, that their chief, despairing to obtain a monopoly of power for his party, elaborately announced himself as the champion of his patrician order, and attempted to coalesce with the liberalised leader of the Tories. Had that negotiation led to the result which was originally intended by those interested,

the Riots of Paris would not have occasioned the Reform of London

It is a great delusion to believe that revolutions are ever effected by a nation It is a faction, and generally a small one, that overthrows a dynasty or remodels a constitution A small party, stung by a long exile from power, and desperate of success except by desperate means, invariably has recourse to a *coup-d'etat* An oligarchical party is necessarily not numerous Its members in general attempt, by noble lineage or vast possessions, to compensate for their poverty of numbers The Whigs, in 1830, found themselves by accident in place, but under very peculiar circumstances They were in place but not in power In each estate of the realm a majority was arrayed against them An appeal to the Commons of England, that constituency which, in its elements, had undergone no alteration since the time of Elizabeth, either by the influence of the legislature or the action of time—that constituency which had elected Pym, and Selden, and Hampden, as well as Somers, Walpole, and Pulteney—an appeal to this constituency, it was generally acknowledged, would be fatal to the Whigs, and

therefore they determined to reconstruct it. This is the origin of the recent parliamentary reform: The Whigs, in place without being in power, resolved as usual upon a *coup-d'état*, and looked about for a stalking-horse. In general the difficult task had devolved upon them of having to accomplish their concealed purpose while apparently achieving some public object. Thus they had carried the Septennial Act on the plea of preserving England from popery, though their real object was to prolong the existence of the first House of Commons in which they could command a majority. But in the present instance they became parliamentary reformers, for by parliamentary reform they could alone subsist; and all their art was dedicated so to contrive, that in this reformation their own interest should secure an irresistible predominance.

But how was an oligarchical party to predominate in popular elections? Here was the difficulty. The Whigs had no resources from their own limited ranks to feed the muster of the popular levies. They were obliged to look about for allies wherewith to form their new popular estate. Any estate of the Commons modelled on any equitable principle,

either of property or population, must have been fatal to the Whigs, they, therefore, very dexterously adopted a small minority of the nation, consisting of the sectarians, and inaugurating them as the people with a vast and bewildering train of hocus-pocus ceremonies, invested the Dissenters with political power By this *coup-d'etat* they managed the House of Commons, and having at length obtained a position, they have from that moment laid siege to the House of Lords, with the intention of reducing that great institution and making it surrender at discretion This is the exact state of English politics during the last five years The Whigs have been at war with the English constitution First of all they captured the King, then they vanquished the House of Commons, now they have laid siege to the House of Lords But here the fallacy of their grand scheme of political mystification begins to develop itself Had, indeed, their new constituency, as they have long impudently pretended, indeed been 'the people,' a struggle between such a body and the House of Lords would have been brief but final The absurdity of supposing that a chamber of two or three hundred individuals could set

up their absolute will and pleasure against the decrees of a legislative assembly chosen by the whole nation, is so glaring that the Whigs and their scribes might reasonably suspect that in making such allegations they were assuredly proving too much. But as 'the people' of the Whigs is in fact a number of Englishmen not exceeding in amount the population of a third-rate city, the English nation is not of opinion that this arrogant and vaunting moiety of a class privileged for the common good, swollen though it may be by some jobbing Scots and rebel Irish, shall pass off their petty and selfish schemes of personal aggrandisement as the will of a great people, as mindful of its duty to its posterity, as it is grateful for the labours of its ancestors. The English nation, therefore, rallies for rescue from the degrading plots of a profligate oligarchy, a barbarising sectarianism, and a boroughmongering Papacy round their hereditary leaders —the Peers. The House of Lords, therefore, at this moment represents everything in the realm except the Whig oligarchs, their tools—the Dissenters, and their masters the Irish priests. In the meantime, the Whigs bawl aloud that there is a 'collision'! It is true

there is a collision, but it is not a collision between the Lords and the people, but between the Ministers and the Constitution

CHAPTER III

It may be as well to remind the English nation that a revolutionary party is not necessarily a liberal one, and that a republic is not indispensably a democracy Such is the disposition of property in England, that were a republic to be established here to-morrow, it would partake rather of the oligarchical than of the aristocratic character We should be surprised to find in how few families the power of the State was concentrated And although the framers of the new commonwealth would be too crafty to base it on any avowed and ostensible principle of exclusion, but on the contrary would in all probability ostentatiously inaugurate the novel constitution by virtue of some abstract plea about as definite and as prodigal of practical effects as the rights of man or the sovereignty of the people, nevertheless I should be astonished were we not to find that the great mass of the

nation, as far as any share in the conduct of public affairs was concerned, were as completely shut out from the fruition and exercise of power as under that Venetian policy which has ever been the secret object of Whig envy and Whig admiration. The Church, under such circumstances, would probably have again been plundered, and therefore the discharge of ecclesiastical duties might be spared to the nation; but the people would assuredly be practically excluded from its services, which would swarm with the relations and connections of the senatorial class; for, whether this country be governed *only* by the House of Commons, or only by the House of Lords, the elements of the single chamber will not materially differ; and although in the event of the triumph of the Commons, the ceremony of periodical election may be retained (and we should not forget that the Long Parliament soon spared us that unnecessary form), the selected members will form a Senate as irresponsible as any House of Parliament whose anomalous constitution may now be the object of Whig sneers or Radical anathemas.

The rights and liberties of a nation can only be preserved by institutions. It is not the

spread of knowledge or the march of intellect that will be found sufficient sureties for the public welfare in the crisis of a country's freedom. Knowledge and capacity are too often the willing tools of a powerful faction or a dexterous adventurer.

In seasons of great popular excitement, gold and glory offer strong temptations to needy ability. The demagogues throughout a country, the orators of town-councils and vestries, and the lecturers of mechanics' institutes, present, doubtless in most cases unconsciously, the ready and fit machinery for the party or the individual that aspires to establish a tyranny. Duly graduating in corruption, the leaders of the mob become the oppressors of the people. Cultivation of intellect and diffusion of knowledge may make the English nation more sensible of the benefits of their social system, and better qualified to discharge the duties with which their institutions have invested them, but they will never render them competent to preserve their liberties without the aid of these institutions. Let us for a moment endeavour to fancy Whiggism in a state of rampant predominance; let us try to contemplate England enj

all those advantages which our present rulers have not yet granted us, and some of which they have as yet only ventured to promise by innuendo. Let us suppose our ancient monarchy abolished, our independent hierarchy reduced to a stipendiary sect, the gentlemen of England deprived of their magisterial functions, and metropolitan prefects and subprefects established in the counties and principal towns, commanding a vigorous and vigilant police, and backed by an army under the immediate orders of a single House of Parliament. Why, these are threatened changes—ay, and not one of them that may not be brought about to-morrow, under the plea of the 'spirit of the age' or 'county reform' or 'cheap government.' But where then will be the liberties of England? Who will dare disobey London? the enlightened and reformed metropolis! And can we think, if any bold Squire, in whom some of the old blood might still chance to linger, were to dare to murmur against this grinding tyranny, or appeal to the spirit of those neighbours whose predecessors his ancestors had protected, can we flatter ourselves that there would not be judges in Westminster Hall prepared and

prompt to inflict on him all the pains and penalties, the dungeon, the fine, the sequestration, which such a troublesome Anti Reformer would clearly deserve? Can we flatter ourselves that a Parliamentary Star Chamber and a Parliamentary High Commission Court would not be in the background to supply all the deficiencies of the laws of England? When these merry times arrive—and, if we proceed in our present course they are much nearer than we imagine—the phrase 'Anti-Reformer' will serve as well as that of 'Malignant,' and be as valid a plea as the former title for harassing and plundering all those who venture to wince under the crowning mercies of centralisation

Behold the Republic of the Whigs! Behold the only Republic that can be established in England except by force! And who can doubt the swift and stern termination of institutions introduced by so unnatural and irrational a process I would address myself to the English Radicals I do not mean those fine gentlemen or those vulgar adventurers, who, in this age of quackery, may sail into Parliament by hoisting for the nonce the false colours of the movement, but I mean that

honest and considerable party, too considerable, I fear, for their happiness and the safety of the State—who have a definite object which they distinctly avow—I mean those thoughtful and enthusiastic men who study their unstamped press, and ponder over a millennium of operative amelioration. Not merely that which is just, but that which is also practicable, should be the aim of a sagacious politician. Let the Radicals well consider whether, in attempting to achieve their avowed object, they are not, in fact, only assisting the secret views of a party whose scheme is infinitely more adverse to their own than the existing system, whose genius I believe they entirely misapprehend. The monarchy of the Tories is more democratic than the Republic of the Whigs. It appeals with a keener sympathy to the passions of the millions; it studies their interest with a more comprehensive solicitude. Admitting for a moment that I have mistaken the genius of the English constitution, what chance, if our institutions be overthrown, is there of substituting in their stead a more popular polity? This hazard, both for their own happiness and the honour of their country, the English Radicals are bound to calculate

desire and determination to uphold the present settlement of the 'three estates of the realm, viz.—King, Lords, and Commons.' Now, his Gracious Majesty is no more an estate of the realm than Lord John Russell himself. The three estates of the realm are the estate of the Lords Spiritual, the estate of the Lords Temporal, and the estate of the Commons. An estate is a popular class established into a political order. It is a section of the nation invested for the public and common good with certain powers and privileges. Lord John Russell first writes upon the English *constitution, and then reforms it, and yet,* even at this moment, is absolutely ignorant of what it consists. A political estate is a complete and independent body. Now, all power that is independent is necessarily irresponsible. The sovereign is responsible because he is not an estate; he is responsible through his Ministers; he is responsible to the estates alone.

When the Whigs obtained power in 1830, they found the three estates of the realm opposed to them, and the Government, therefore, could not proceed. They resolved, therefore, to remodel them. They declared that the House of Commons was the House of the

people, and that the people were not proper
represented They consequently enlarged th
estate of the Commons, they increased th
number of that privileged order who appea
by their representatives in the Lower House of
Parliament They rendered the estate of the
Commons more powerful by this proceeding,
because they rendered them more numerous,
but they did not render their representatives
one jot more the representatives of the people
Throwing the Commons of Ireland out of the
question, for we cannot speculate upon a
political order so unsettled that it has been
thrice remodelled during the present century,
some 300,000 individuals sent up, at the last
general election, their representatives to West
minster Well, are these 300,000 persons
the people of England? Grant that they are,
grant that these members are divided into two
equal portions Well, then, the people of
England consist of 150,000 persons I know
that there are well disposed persons that
tremble at this reasoning, because, although
they admit its justice, they allege it leads to
universal suffrage We must not show, they
assert, that the House of the people is not
elected by the people I admit it, we must

not show that the House of the people is not elected by the people, but we must show that the House of Commons is not the House of the people, that it never was intended to be the House of the people, and that, if it be admitted to be so by courtesy, or become so in fact, it is all over with the English constitution.

It is quite impossible that a whole people *can* be a branch of a legislature. If a whole people have the power of making laws it is folly to suppose that they will allow an assembly of 300 or 400 individuals, or a solitary being on a throne, to thwart their sovereign will and pleasure. But I deny that a people can govern itself. Self-*government* is a contradiction in terms. Whatever form a government may assume, power must be exercised by a minority of members. I shall, perhaps, be reminded of the ancient republics. I answer, that the ancient republics were as aristocratic communities as any that flourished in the middle ages. The Demos of Athens was an oligarchy living upon slaves. There is a great slave population even in the United States, if a society of yesterday is to illustrate an argument on our ancient civilisation.

But it is useless to argue the question

abstractedly The phrase 'the people' is sheer nonsense It is not a political term It is a phrase of natural history A people is a species, a civilised community is a nation Now, a nation is a work of art and a work of time A nation is gradually created by a variety of influences—the influence of original organisation, of climate, soil, religion, law customs, manners, extraordinary accidents and incidents in their history, and the individual character of their illustrious citizens These influences create the nation—these form the national mind, and produce in the course of centuries a high degree of civilisation If you destroy the political institutions which these influences have called into force, and which are the machinery by which they constantly act, you destroy the nation The nation, in a state of anarchy and dissolution, then becomes a people and after experiencing all the consequent misery, like a company of bees spoiled of their queen and rifled of their hive, they set to again and establish themselves into a society

Although all society is artificial, the most artificial society in the world is unquestionably the English nation Our insular situation and

our foreign empire, our immense accumulated wealth and our industrious character, our peculiar religious state, which secures alike orthodoxy and toleration, our church and our sects, our agriculture and our manufactures, our military services, our statute law, and supplementary equity, our adventurous commerce, landed tenure, and unprecedented system of credit, form, among many others, such a variety of interests, that I do not think even the Abbé Sieyès himself could devise a scheme by which this nation could be absolutely and definitely represented.

The framers of the English constitution were fortunately not of the school of Abbé Sieyès. Their first object was to make us free; their next was to keep us so. While, therefore, they selected equality as the basis of their social order, they took care to blend every man's ambition with the perpetuity of the State. Unlike the levelling equality of modern days, the ancient equality of England elevates and creates. Learned in human nature, the English constitution holds out privilege to every subject as the inducement to do his duty. As it has secured freedom, justice, and even property to the humblest of the common-

House of Commons is responsible only to that privileged order who are its constituents. Between the Lords and the Commons themselves there is this prime difference—that the Lords are known, and seen, and marked; the Commons are unknown, invisible, and unobserved. The Lords meet in a particular spot; the Commons are scattered over the kingdom. The eye of the nation rests upon the Lords, few in number, and notable in position; the eye of the nation wanders in vain for the Commons, far more numerous, but far less remarkable. As a substitute the nation appeals to the House of Commons, but sometimes appeals in vain; for if the majority of the Commons choose to support their representatives in a course of conduct adverse to the opinion of the nation, the House of Commons will set the nation at defiance. They have done so once; may they never repeat that destructive career! Such are our two Houses of Parliament—the most illustrious assemblies since the Roman Senate and Grecian Areopagus; neither of them is the 'House of the People,' but both alike represent the 'Nation.'

ment may nevertheless be republican. Thus the ancient polity of Rome, in its best days, was an aristocracy, and the government of Constantinople is the nearest approach to a democracy on a great scale, and maintained during a great period, that history offers. The constitution of France during the last half century has been fast approaching that of the Turks. The barbarous Jacobins blended modern equality with the refined civilisation of ancient France; the barbarous Ottomans blended their equality with the refined civilisation of ancient Rome. Paris secured to the Jacobins those luxuries that their system never could have produced: Byzantium served the same purpose to the Turks. Both the French and their turbaned prototypes commenced their system with popular enthusiasm, and terminated it with general subjection. Napoleon and Louis Philippe are playing the same part as the Soleimans and the Mahmouds. The Chambers are but a second-rate Divan; the Prefects but inferior Pachas: a solitary being rules alike in the Seraglio and the Tuileries, and the whole nation bows to his despotism on condition that they have no other master save himself.

The disposition of property in England throws the government of the country into the hands of its natural aristocracy I do not believe that any scheme of the suffrage, or any method of election, could divert that power into other quarters It is the necessary consequence of our present social state I believe, the wider the popular suffrage, the more powerful would be the natural aristocracy This seems to me an inevitable consequence but I admit this proposition on the clear understanding that such an extension should be established on a fair, and not a fictious, basis Here, then, arises the question of the ballot, into the merits of which I shall take another opportunity of entering, recording only now my opinion, that in the present arrangement of the constituencies, even the ballot would favour the power of the natural aristocracy, and that, if the ballot were introduced with a fair and not a fictious extension of the suffrage, it would produce no difference whatever in the ultimate result

Quitting, then, these considerations, let us arrive at the important point Is there any probability of a different disposition of property in England—a disposition of property

which, by producing a very general similarit
of condition, would throw the government c
the country into the hands of any individual
whom popular esteem or fancy might select?

It appears to me that this question can only
be decided by ascertaining the genius of the
English nation. What is the prime character-
istic of the English mind? I apprehend I
may safely decide upon its being industry.
Taking a general but not a superficial survey
of the English character since the Reformation,
a thousand circumstances convince me that
the salient point in our national psychology
is the passion for accumulating wealth, of
which industry is the chief instrument. We
value our freedom principally because it leaves
us unrestricted in our pursuits; and that
reverence for law and all that is established,
is occasioned by the conviction that, next
to liberty, order is the most efficacious
assistant of industry.

And thus we see that those great revolutions
which must occur in the history of all nations,
when they happen here produce no permanent
effects upon our social state. Our revolutions
are brought about by the passions of creative
minds taking advantage, for their own aggran-

disement, of peculiar circumstances in our national progress. They are never called for by *the great body of the nation*. Churches are plundered, long rebellions maintained, dynasties changed, parliaments abolished; but when the storm is passed, the features of the social landscape remain unimpaired; there are no traces of the hurricane, the earthquake, or the volcano; it has been but a tumult of the atmosphere, that has neither toppled down our old spires and palaces nor swallowed up our cities and seats of learning, nor blasted our ancient woods, nor swept away our ports and harbours. The English nation ever recurs to its ancient institutions—the institutions that have alike secured freedom and order; and after all their ebullitions, we find them, when the sky is clear, again at work, and toiling on at their eternal task of accumulation.

There is this difference between the revolutions of England and the revolutions of the Continent—the European revolution is a struggle against privilege; an English revolution is a struggle for it. If a new class rises in the State, it becomes uneasy to take its place in the natural aristocracy of the land: a desperate faction or a wily leader takes advantage

of this desire, and a revolution is the consequence. Thus the Whigs in the present day have risen to power on the shoulders of the manufacturing interest. To secure themselves in their posts, the Whigs have given the new interest an undue preponderance; but the new interest, having obtained its object, is content. The manufacturer, like every other Englishman, is as aristocratic as the landlord. The manufacturer begins to lack in movement. Under Walpole the Whigs played the same game with the commerical interest; a century has passed, and the commercial interest are all as devoted to the constitution as the manufacturers soon will be. Having no genuine party, the Whigs seek for succour from the Irish papists; Lord John Russell, however, is only imitating Pym under the same circumstances. In 1640, when the English movement was satisfied, and the constitutional party, headed by such men as Falkland and Hyde, were about to attain power, Pym and his friends, in despair at their declining influence and the close divisions in their once unanimous Parliament, fled to the Scotch Covenanters, and entered into a 'close compact' for the de-

struction of the Church of England as the price of their assistance So events repeat themselves, but if the study of history is really to profit us, the nation at the present day will take care that the same results do not always occur from the same events

When passions have a little subsided, the industrious ten pounder, who has struggled into the privileged order of the Commons, proud of having obtained the first step of aristocracy, will be the last man to assist in destroying the other gradations of the scale which he or his posterity may yet ascend, the new member of a manufacturing district has his eye already upon a neighbouring park, avails himself of his political position to become a county magistrate, meditates upon a baronetcy, and dreams of a coroneted descendant

The nation that esteems wealth as the great object of existence will submit to no laws that do not secure the enjoyment of wealth Now, we deprive wealth of its greatest source of enjoyment, as well as of its best security, if we deprive it of power The English nation, therefore, insists that property shall be the qualification for power, and the whole scope of its laws and customs is to promote and

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which every Englishman will always be devoted except he is a Whig In the next Chapter I shall discuss the second proposition

CHAPTER VI

The Tories assert that the whole property of the country is on their side, and the Whigs, wringing their hands over lost elections and bellowing about 'intimidation,' seem to confess the soft impeachment Their prime organ also assures us that every man with 500*l* per annum is opposed to them Yet the Whig-Radical writers have recently published by way of consolation to their penniless proselytes, a list of some twenty Dukes and Marquises, who, they assure us, are devoted to 'Liberal' principles, and whose revenues, in a paroxysm of economical rhodomontade, they assert, could buy up the whole income of the rest of the hereditary Peerage The Whig Radical writers seem puzzled to reconcile this anomalous circumstance with the indisputably forlorn finances of their faction in general Now, this little tract on the 'Spirit of Whiggism' may perhaps throw some light

favour the accumulation of wealth and the perpetuation of property. We cannot alter, therefore, the disposition of property in this country without we change the national character. Far from the present age being hostile to the supremacy of property, there has been no period of our history where property has been more esteemed, because there has been no period when the nation has been so industrious.

Believing, therefore, that no change will occur in the disposition of property in this country, I cannot comprehend how our government can become more democratic. The consequence of our wealth is an aristocratic constitution; the consequence of our love of liberty is an aristocratic constitution founded on an equality of civil rights. And who can deny that an aristocratic constitution resting on such a basis, where the legislative, and even the executive office may be obtained by every subject of the realm, is, in fact, a noble democracy? The English constitution, faithful to the national character, secures to all the enjoyment of property and the delights of freedom. Its honours are a perpetual reward of industry; every Englishman is toiling to obtain them; and this is the constitution to

who wish to be above it, and oligarchies and despotisms are usually established by the agency of a deluded multitude The Crown, with its constitutional influence over the military services, a Parliament of two houses, watching each other's proceedings with constitutional jealousy, an independent hierarchy, and, not least, an independent magistracy, are serious obstacles in the progressive estab lishment of that scheme of government which *a small knot of great families, these dukes and* marquises, whose revenues according to the Government organ, could buy up the income of the whole peerage, *naturally wish to introduce* We find, therefore, throughout the whole period of our more modern history, a powerful section of the great nobles ever at war with the national institutions, checking the Crown, attacking the independence of *that* House of Parliament in which they happen to be in a minority, no matter which, patronising sects to reduce the influence of the Church, and playing town against country to overcome the authority of *the gentry*

It is evident that these aspiring oligarchs, as a party, can have little essential strength, they can count upon [illegible]

upon this perplexing state of affairs. For myself, I see in it only a fresh illustration of the principles which I have demonstrated, from the whole current of our history, to form the basis of Whig policy. This union of oligarchical wealth and mob poverty is the very essence of the 'Spirit of Whiggism.'

The English constitution, which, from the tithing-man to the Peer of Parliament, has thrown the whole government of the country into the hands of those who are qualified by property to perform the duties of their respective offices, has secured that diffused and general freedom, without which the national industry would neither have its fair play nor its just reward, by a variety of institutions, which, while they prevent those who have no property from invading the social commonwealth, in whose classes every industrious citizen has a right to register himself, offer also an equally powerful check to the ambitious fancies of those great families, over whose liberal principles and huge incomes the Whig-Radical writers gloat with the self-complacency of lackeys at the equipages of their masters. There is ever an union in a perverted sense between those who are beneath power and those

who wish to be above it, and oligarchies and despotisms are usually established by the agency of a deluded multitude The Crown, with its constitutional influence over the military services, a Parliament of two houses, watching each other's proceedings with constitutional jealousy, an independent hierarchy, and, not least, an independent magistracy, are serious obstacles in the progressive establishment of that scheme of government which a small knot of great families, these dukes and marquises, whose revenues according to the Government organ, could buy up the income of the whole peerage, naturally wish to introduce We find, therefore, throughout the whole period of our more modern history, a powerful section of the great nobles ever at war with the national institutions, checking the Crown, attacking the independence of that House of Parliament in which they happen to be in a minority, no matter which, patronising sects to reduce the influence of the Church; and playing town against country to overcome the authority of the gentry

It is evident that these aspiring oligarchs, as a party, can have little essential strength, they can count upon nothing but their retainers

To secure the triumph of their cause, therefore, they are forced to manœuvre with a pretext, and while they aim at oligarchical rule, they apparently advocate popular rights. They hold out, consequently, an inducement to all the uneasy portion of the nation to enlist under their standard; they play their discontented minority against the prosperous majority, and, dubbing their partisans 'the people,' they flatter themselves that their projects are irresistible. The attack is unexpected, brisk, and dashing, well matured, dexterously mystified. Before the nation is roused to its danger, the oligarchical object is often obtained; and then the oligarchy, entrenched in power, count upon the nation to defend them from their original and revolutionary allies. If they succeed, a dynasty is changed, or a Parliament reformed, and the movement is stopped; if the Tories or the Conservatives cannot arrest the fatal career which the Whigs have originally impelled, then away go the national institutions; the crown falls from the King's brow; the crosier is snapped in twain; one House of Parliament is sure to disappear, and the gentlemen of England, dexterously dubbed Malignants, or

Anti-Reformers, or any other phrase in fashion, the dregs of the nation sequester their estates and install themselves in their halls, and 'liberal principles' having thus gloriously triumphed, after a due course of plunder, bloodshed, *imprisonment*, and ignoble tyranny, *the people of England*, sighing once more to be *the English nation*, secure order by submitting to a despot, and in time, when they have got rid of their despot, combine their ancient freedom with their newly-regained security by re-establishing the English constitution

The Whigs of the present day have made their assault upon the nation with their usual spirit They have already *succeeded in* controlling the sovereign and in remodelling the House of Commons *They have menaced* the House of Lords, violently assailed the Church, and *reconstructed the Corporations* I shall take the two most comprehensive measures which they have succeeded in carrying, and which were at the time certainly very popular, and apparently of a very democratic character,—their reform of the House of Commons, and their reconstruction of the municipal corporations Let us see whether these great measures have, increased the

democratic character of our constitution or not—whether they veil an oligarchical project, or are popular concessions invariably offered by the Whigs in their oligarchical career.

The result of the Whig remodelling of the order of the Commons has been this—that it has placed the nomination of the Government in the hands of the popish priesthood. Is that a great advance of public intelligence and popular liberty? Are the parliamentary nominees of M'Hale and Kehoe more germane to the feelings of the English nation, more adapted to represent their interests, than the parliamentary nominees of a Howard or a Percy? This papist majority, again, is the superstructure of a basis formed by some Scotch Presbyterians and some English Dissenters, in general returned by the small constituencies of small towns—classes whose number and influence, intelligence and wealth, have been grossly exaggerated for factious purposes, but classes avowedly opposed to the maintenance of the English constitution. I do not see that the cause of popular power has much risen, even with the addition of this leaven. If the suffrages of the Commons of England were polled together, the hustings-

books of the last general election will prove that a very considerable majority of their numbers is opposed to the present Government, *and that therefore, under this new democratic scheme, this great body of the nation are, by some hocus pocus tactics or other, obliged to submit to the minority* The truth is, that the new constituency has been so arranged that an unnatural preponderance has been given to a small class, and one hostile to the interests of the great body Is this more democratic? The apparent majority in the House of Commons is produced by a minority of the Commons themselves, so that a small class command a majority in the House of Commons, and the sway of the administration, *as far as that House is concerned, is regu* lated by a smaller number of individuals than those who governed it previous to its reform

But this is not the whole evil this new class, with its unnatural preponderance, is a class hostile to the institutions of the country, hostile to the union of Church and State, hostile to the House of Lords, to the constitutional power of the Crown, to the existing system of provincial judicature It is, therefore, a class fit and willing to support the

Whigs in their favourite scheme of centralisation, without which the Whigs can never long maintain themselves in power. Now, centralisation is the death-blow of public freedom; it is the citadel of the oligarchs, from which, if once erected, it will be impossible to dislodge them.

But can that party be aiming at centralised government which has reformed the municipal corporations? We will see. The reform of the municipal corporations of England is a covert attack on the authority of the English gentry,—that great body which perhaps forms the most substantial existing obstacle to the perpetuation of Whiggism in power. By this democratic Act the county magistrate is driven from the towns where he before exercised a just influence, while an elective magistrate from the towns jostles him on the bench at quarter sessions, and presents in his peculiar position an anomaly in the constitution of the bench, flattering to the passions, however fatal to the interests, of the giddy million. Here is a lever to raise the question of county reform whenever an obstinate shire may venture to elect a representative in Parliament hostile to the liberal oligarchs. Let us admit, for the moment, that the Whigs ulti-

cratic government than the English constitution, it will be as well, I conceive, for those *who love their* rights, to maintain that constitution; and if the more recent measures of the Whigs, *however plausible* their first aspect, have, in fact, been a departure from the *democratic* character of that constitution, it will be as well for the English *nation* to oppose, with all their heart, and all their soul, and all *their strength*, the machinations of the Whigs and the '*Spirit of* Whiggism.'

